'In Motion-Picture Land': A Cultural History about the Making of Early Hollywood

by

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A dissertation submitted to the Graduate Faculty in History in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy, The City University of New York

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Abstract

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This dissertation investigates the relationship between Hollywood's seemingly overnight development into the nation's first mass culture industry and women's roles as industry workers, fans, and social critics in shaping and defining the sexual and racial politics of postwar America. In doing so, it explores how the stories told about the creation of early Hollywood in the years between 1915 and 1921—in fan magazines, the periodical press, and by pioneering publicists like Louella Parsons—portrayed the industry's work environment and social climate as the nation's latest frontier, one wide-open to women adventurers eager to seek their fortunes out West. Responding to this image, women not only became the industry's biggest supporters, but many ventured to Los Angeles to emulate the fantastic success and power that screenwriters like Elinor Glyn and producer-actresses like Gloria Swanson, Alla Nazimova, and Mary Pickford wielded. Others sought to partake of the cultural ethos that Hollywood's films and publicity put on show—a progressively more sexy, glamorous, "Orientalized" display that depicted the fruits of the period's first sexual revolution and the rising influence the new immigrants. The Great War both abetted these changes and engendered a backlash against them. Increasingly, religious reformers, activist clubwomen in the General Federation of Women's Clubs, Henry Ford, argued that only state and federal regulation could preserve the nation's Anglo-Saxon moral values and protect its young womanhood from the new

'Movie Trust"—or "Hebrew Trust." These pressures exploded to create Hollywood's first sex scandal; an event that involved the death of actress Virginia Rappe following a party hosted by the slapstick comedy star, Roscoe "Fatty" Arbuckle. Ultimately, the Rappe-Arbuckle scandal ended the industry's willingness to encourage young women's fantastical ambitions and precipitated tighter controls over the industry's image.

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Writing and researching a dissertation is a paradoxical exercise; it is at once a profoundly solitary activity and one that demands an intricate lattice of support. Many friends, librarians, and professors contributed to building this project. I owe its origins to my advisor, Professor David Nasaw, who also gave me sage advice along the way and, perhaps most importantly, a willingness to believe that, after all, I might become an historian. Late in the game, Professors Jackson Lears, Ann Fabian and Gabrielle Spiegel provided very different, but equally compelling models of how to imagine what that role might look like in practice. Professors Barbara Welter, George Custen, Colin Palmer, and Ronald Walters offered crucial counsel or suggestions at key moments. I thank the CUNY history department for its financial investment in the project's completion.

I can only hope that my sister travelers in graduate school—Kelly Anderson, Carol Giardina and, particularly, Carol Quirke and Marcella Bencievenni—know how very deeply in their debt I am. Without them I would not have reached page one—let alone page three hundred and seventy-one. I thank my mother, Kathryn Hallett, for her patience with a process that I know dragged on too long for liking. My sister Kaitlin Hallett offered instant assistance with legal questions, unflagging encouragement, and posed as the ideal target reader in my mind. Finally, I dedicate this to my husband Christopher Brown. Since words fail to capture the complexity of his relationship to this project and my life, I say simply: Comerado! Give me your paw and let's move on, together.

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Part I., Along the Road to Hollywood

Chapter 1.
Landscapes

By 1920, the city and the country were all mixed up. Between the "War to Liberate Cuba" and the "War to Make the World Safe for Democracy," immigrants from southern and eastern Europe, no less than from the American Midwest and South, had made their way to cities great and small across the United States. The process was a familiar one, dating back to the antebellum period. What had changed was the velocity of the movement, the sheer numbers of those on the move, and the destinations to which their ambitions drove them. The industrial engine that drew migrants also fired boat and train and, finally, the trickle of automobiles that propelled their exodus out of rural homelands. Generally westward they continued as before. But few now went in search of a homestead on some sketchily mapped piece of the country that remained. Hopes for a different life—one with more economic opportunity, comfort, excitement, or simply less oppression—lay, for most, along city-sidewalks. Thus the census officially marked what many Americans had already recognized: by 1920, for the first time, the majority within the United States lived in cities.[1]

Imagining the migrants who headed for American cities in this period often evokes images of wayfarers in unfamiliar dress disembarking from steamships at Ellis Island, or escaping north on trains with the tastes and musical rhythms of the race-riven

[1] In 1920, the U.S. Census revealed that for the first time more than half of Americans lived in cities. Cities were defined as settlements with more than 2,500 people. It also documented that the nation contained 68 cities exceeding 100,000 persons. See Paul Boyer, *Urban Masses and Moral Order in America* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1978), 189.

South.[2] Such snapshots, literally, abound, documenting the decade before the outbreak of the Great War when European immigration peaked and the War swelled the first great current of black Americans to the North and Midwest.[3] Both groups largely settled in the cities of the Northeast and the Midwest, against whose brick, concrete, and steel they hurled their ambitions.[4] The same 1920 census revealed the altered landscape wrought by their determination: in no major city east of the Mississippi, or north of the Missouri and Ohio Rivers, did white Americans born of native citizens remain in the majority.[5]

Another pattern of immigration shaped settlement along the Pacific Coast. A different part of the country made its way toward cities there, a part of the country that spoke in accents flatter than those of the Southern American and European travelers. The movement of native-born, white children out of the Midwest—"white" doubling for the ethnic heritage then commonly called Anglo-Saxon—proved no less dramatic.[6] Less absolute need, but as much imagination, sent many of these erstwhile farmers and

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[2] On blacks "Southernizaton" of Chicago, see James Grossman, *Land of Hope* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1989). For a broader exploration of the influence of black artists on American culture, see Gerald Early, *Tuxedo Junction* (Hopewell, NJ: Ecco Press, 1994); Ann Douglas, *Terrible Honesty* (New York: Farrar, Straus & Giroux, 1995),

[3] The current from Europe peaked in 1907 and then hovered somewhere just above 650, 000 until the outbreak of the World War. See John Higham, *Strangers In the Land* (New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 1992, ed.), 159. By 1920, the population of black Americans in St. Louis stood at 100,000, Chicago's at 130,000, New York and Philadelphia at about 250,000 each, see August Meier and Elliott Rudwick, *From Plantation to Ghetto* (New York: Hill and Wang, 1970, rev. ed.), 214-16.

[4] In 1920 more than 80% of people in the U.S. who were born in Russia, Ireland, Italy, and Poland lived in cities, David Ward, *Cities and Immigrants* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1971), 56.

[5] Cities include the largest in the region: New York, Boston, Chicago, Cleveland, Milwaukee, Detroit, Buffalo, Minneapolis, Pittsburgh, Philadelphia, St. Louis, Cincinnati, and Baltimore. Based on the federal census tables reproduced in Robert Fogelson, *The Fragmented Metropolis, Los Angeles, 1850-1930* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1967), 75-83.

[6] Ibid., 78-9.

shopkeepers across prairie, desert, and mountains in a wave of rural to urban resettlement that summons few images to mind today.[7] Southern California was the destination most favored by these travelers. There, savvy developers directed a stream of publicity touting the region's natural beauty, temperate climate, new work ideals, and singular ethnic composition. Such promotions particularly benefited Los Angeles, making it one of the nation's fastest growing cities after 1880.[8] A piece of the country's heartland responded, and in the Los Angeles that resulted, the country and city were, indeed, all mixed up.

The domestic migration of these Midwesterners followed that of an earlier generation of whites, dubbed Americanos, Yankees, or simply Anglos by the Indians and Mexicans who encountered them. After 1848, the blaze of Manifest Destiny ignited by the victorious conquest over Mexico, and the flush of gold and silver fevers produced by the discoveries of precious minerals in California's northern half, propelled the first substantial wave of Yankees toward the nation's self-proclaimed last frontier. "Go West, young man, and grow with the country!" proclaimed the late, great newspaper man Horace Greeley. Greeley's cry joined a chorus of other newspaper men and politicians who championed the idea that the nation's future lay in seizing and developing western lands.[9] Editorializing in the *Tribune* like a preacher, Greeley exhorted young men west as if salvation itself lay in this constantly shifting locale. And Greeley quickly trumpeted

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[7] After 1900, their massive relocation to western cities meant that the proportion of native-born to foreign-born in America's total urban population remained virtually unchanged, see Higham, 158-160.

[8] Fogelson, 79.

[9] Constance Rourke, *Trumpets of Jubilee* (New York: Harcourt, Brace & Co., 1927), 300-4. John B. L. Soule, of the Terre Haute, Indiana *Express* originated the phrase "Go West, Young man!" but Greeley popularized it. Coy F. Cross II, *Go West Young Man!* (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1995), 141, ftnt., 1. Greeley has been called "the best known exponent" of the safety valve theory. Henry Nash Smith, *Virgin Land* (New York: Knopf, 1950), 234.

the new state he called "the young Queen of the Pacific"—California—as the nation's Promised Land.[10]

An outpouring of letters from the San Francisco Bay Area created a picture of those who heeded such calls; these writings invested the old story of the frontier—a story of heroic conquest and disciplined fortune seeking—with new meanings.[11] After the Civil War, San Francisco and Oakland, the boomtowns created by the spillover from fortune hunters' efforts in the hills and valleys that held the mother lode, became centers of literary production. Writers like Bret Harte and Mark Twain in *Overland Monthly*—a magazine "Devoted to the Development of the Country" that was published out of San Francisco beginning in 1868—etched a Wild West into the popular imagination; dime-store novelists and performers like Buffalo Bill embellished it for their own ends in the subsequent decades.[12] Here was a frontier populated by an advance guard of scouts who set out to seize the land for proper cultivation; a region that teemed with new kinds of

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[10] On Greeley's belief that California would become New York's main commercial rival and that its gold rush one of the luckiest events in history, see Cross, 11.

[11] Gary Scharnhorst, *Bret Harte; Opening the American Literary West* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 2000); Joseph Coulombe, *Mark Twain and the American Literary West* (Columbia: University of Missouri Press, 2003).

[12] Here, I obviously simplify the complex subjects and debates about the western genre to signal the broad differences between depictions and uses of the Wild West north and those of Southern California. For a discussion of Harte's role as its founding editor and the eastern literary establishment's enthusiasm for these new kinds Western stores, see Sharnhorst, 36-49. For an interesting treatment that stresses Twain's development of a broadly Western literary persona and subject matter to appeal to readers and critics in the East, see Coulombe, 47-66. On how some stories use the frontier and its inhabitants to directly challenge genteel codes of behavior after the 1870s, see Richard Slotkin, *The Fatal Environment* (New York: Atheneum, 1985). For a valuable discussion of western popular fiction aimed at working class readers that challenge older interpretations of how to understand the meaning of the new, "sensational" western story, see Michael Denning, *Mechanic Accents* (London: Verso, 1987), 157-66. The idea that Buffalo Bill's celebrity was geared to a more respectable audience is discussed in, Joy Kasson, *Buffalo Bill's Wild West* (New York: Hill and Wang, 2000), 11-64.

nearly anti-heroic protagonists.[13] Here was the West of mining camps, brothels, and gambling halls; a region that roared with gunshots, saloon fights, and bawdy humor; a place where men risked fortunes and lives in poker games. Here men escaped women and the effeminate standards of civilization that had encroached upon the East for the freedom to enact a new style of masculinity.[14]

When literary attention turned to the state's southern half in the 1880s, the past that was used to attract new settlers to the region traded on an allure that was very different than that projected to the north.[15] The Midwesterners who traveled to southern California in the new century differed markedly from the hard-scrabble lot they followed. Attracting men and women of more substantial means demanded a different presentation of the West's long fabled "addiction to independence."[16] Gone was the Wild West of California's immediate past. The violence of Indian dispossession by the Spanish and of Mexican dispossession by Americanos was largely erased from the history of the Southern California. Gone were the myriad struggles for power along this frontier where

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[13] "Conflict and conquest, not patient labor and steady rise in status, are the dream story of success purveyed" in sensational-style dime novels aimed at a working class audience while western figures that emphasized the "myth of the hunter" were promoted in expensive books aimed at "'respectable' sectors of the reading public," Slotkin, 203-6.

[14] On the Wild West's promotion of a new kind of masculinity, see Coulombe, 2-12; Jackson Lears, *Something for Nothing* (New York: Viking, 2003), 215-42. Although her book concentrates on the twentieth century representations, an insightful reading of the genre that stresses its role as an expression of men's desire to escape from the domestic, civilized East, see Jane Tompkins, *West of Everything* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1992).

[15] On how romanticizing California's mission history erased the genocide of American Indians and the culture of Mexicans, see Douglas Monroy, *Thrown Among Strangers* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1990), 233-77. My discussion of civic boosterism relies heavily on Fogelson's excellent discussion, 70-5. My descriptions of literary and journalistic representations of the region indebted to Kevin Starr, *Inventing the Dream* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1985), 31-99.

[16] For a discussion of the evolution of this stereotype, see Monroy, chap. 1.

only the most fearsome, wily, and luckiest of Anglo men triumphed in the end. Popular tales of the area surrounding Los Angeles instead offered Americans The West as a domesticated romance, one translated into history, story, and, above all else, booster campaign. Helen Hunt Jackson's best selling novel, *Ramona*, and the multi-volume histories published by the Bancroft Company, traded on the beauty and health-giving aspects of landscape and light, the kind instruction of padres to Indians in wine and sun drenched Spanish missions, and the generosity of gentlemen dons entertaining Anglos come to barter liberty and the virtues of the free market for land.[17] "And so they lived," wrote Hubert Howe Bancroft in *California Pastoral*, "opening their eyes in the morning when they saw the sun; they breathed the fresh air, and listened to the song of birds; mounting their steeds they road forth in the enjoyment of healthful exercise; they tended their flocks, held intercourse with each other, and ran up a fair credit in heaven."[18]

By the time readers encountered Bancroft's version of Southern California's recent past, the small number of rancheros who had held title to the vast tracts of land surrounding the tiny pueblo of Los Angeles had indeed passed into history. Their self-sufficient domains built on cattle and the seigneurially controlled labor of Indians and Mexicans had disappeared; the land sold and auctioned into the hands of railroad companies, real estate developers, and commercial farmers.[19] Like a quieter version of the region's original Trust—the Southern and Pacific Railroad (S&P) whose effects muckraking journalist Frank Norris decried in *The Octopus*—agribusiness quickly

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[17] *History of California* (San Francisco: Bancroft Co., 1886-90); Helen Hunt Jackson, *Ramona* (Boston: Robert Bros., 1884).

[18] Hubert Howe Bancroft, *California Pastoral, 1769-1848*, (San Francisco: The History Company, 1888), 360.

[19] On Spanish and Mexican land tenure, see Monroy, 100-2, 145-8, 184-5; On subsequent developments, Fogelson, 8-20.

stretched its tentacles across the state.[20] By 1900, 7% of farm owners owned 63% of the land in a state where coast, desert, and mountain ranges made farming impossible in large areas.[21] Both the S&P Railroad and agribusiness imitated to some extent the pattern established by the rancheros' earlier domains. But a celebration of land monopoly did not make it into the way of life commemorated in contemporary visions of California Pastoral. First in the Valley's wheat fields, and then in the seemingly limitless crops that replaced wheat after its price collapsed in 1894, agricultural production in California was characterized by vast holdings employing gangs of Mexican and Japanese whose status as nonwhites justified their brutal exploitation in a manner similar to that faced by black agricultural workers in the Jim Crow South.[22]

The new Anglo developers of the land required migrants to the region who could afford to invest in their projects. And it was there, in that "special meeting ground between history and myth," that the commercial interests of the region collided with the image of California Pastoral to produce perhaps the most shining example in the long line of astonishingly successful booster campaigns dating back to the country's colonial development.[23] Here—publicized railroad officials, agricultural associations, and finally the Los Angeles Chamber of Commerce to the prosperous of the Midwest—lay the country's own Mediterranean garden, greened by the latest technological wonders in civil engineering and filled with free standing bungalows designed and decorated in its newly

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[20] Frank Norris, *The Octopus* (1901).
[21] Land statistic cited in Starr, 173.
[22] For how the oppression of Mexicans and Indians around Los Angeles in the nineteenth century set the pattern for treatment in the twentieth century, Fogelson, 233-85.
[23] On booster campaigns aimed at the Midwest see, Starr, 40-47; Fogelson, 60-76. "Meeting ground," Warren Susman, "History and the American Intellectual" in *Culture as History* (New York: Pantheon, 1984), 11.

romantic Spanish past.[24] Between 1880 and 1890 the population of the city of Los Angeles shot from 11,183 to 50, 395; it doubled during the next decade, reaching 102,000.[25]

It was around this time, as the new century began, that those who had learned "how to make money out of wind" promoting Los Angeles recognized that most of the new kids, and more elderly folk, who had come to town hailed largely from the Main Streets of the Midwest.[26] "I am satisfied that the immigration practically radiates from Chicago," judged the Los Angeles Chamber of Commerce president in 1909, "and I am equally satisfied that we will have to fight most of our battles there."[27] The battle had already begun, including a joint campaign in 1907 sponsored by the citrus growers' exchange and the Southern Pacific Railroad that financed an Orange Train to Iowa promising residents, "Oranges for Health—California for Wealth."[28] In the succinct language of advertising such promotions, which would continue in ever more inventive ways throughout the 1920s, tantalized color-starved, fruit-short rural Midwesterners with a more prosaic version of pastoral California's present. Come, slogan and fruit beckoned, eat of our exotic, *Sunkist* natural bounty (the trademark came into usage the same year that the Orange Train arrived in Iowa), and follow to where such bounty falls from the trees.

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[24] On how single-family homes were characteristic from the start, see Fogelson, 142-52; On "Spanish" architecture, see Starr, 41-2, 65-8, 78.
[25] Statistic cited in Fogelson, 67. The population of LA was 1.2 million in 1920, 77.
[26] Los Angeles Chamber of Commerce (hereafter LACC) quoted in Fogelson, 67.
[27] LACC quoted Ibid., 72. On how Illinois sent more emigrants to California between 1910 and 1940 than any other state, see Warren S. Thompson, *Growth and Changes in California's Population*, (Los Angeles: The Haynes Foundation, 1955), 88.
[28] LACC quoted in Starr, 162.

The Orange Train to Iowa also testified to the fact that those promoting Los Angeles were wise to more than the newcomers' region of origin. The design of the advertising campaign sold a vision of California that skipped depicting the land as fruitful resource to develop, fastening instead onto an image that pictured the land as a fruit-tree—a symbol equal parts health and wealth that only needed to be plucked. This difference, between a better land on which to labor and a place in which labor seemingly vanished, reflected a shift in selling southern California as the "farm perfected, saved from loneliness and back breaking labor" to selling it as a refuge from farming itself.[29] For after 1900, the region's savvy advertisers increasingly realized that the Midwesterners flocked to Southern California in search of speculative real estate profits, suburban bungalows, and sunshine in which to retire as much as work.[30] Their hopes, indeed the very impetus that spurred many of the moves to the *Land of Sunshine/Out West*, made tangible the waning of the agrarian myth and the refashioning of the Protestant work ethic.[31]

That many of these erstwhile farmers and shop keepers only passed through Chicago—obviously a much closer urban center, and one also experiencing tremendous growth—on the way to Los Angeles spoke to another important dimension of what sent these newcomers west. The Midwesterners who went to Los Angeles responded to

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[29] Ibid, 45. Thompson discusses how California employed far fewer agricultural workers than the rest of the United States after 1870, noting that even after the number of male workers employed in agriculture rose between 1880 and 1890 to reach 26.5% that this was far below a national average of almost 40%, 123-5.

[30] For a discussion of the non-pecuniary reasons for Midwestern migration, see Fogelson, chap. 4.

[31] On cultural and economic influences affecting the refashioning of the Protestant work ethic among the WASP middle class in the Northeast see, Daniel Rodgers, *The Work Ethic in Industrial America*, especially chap. 4.

promotions that worked hard to distinguish the region as a congenial haven for a specific kind of recently rural emigrant: white, Protestant, and native born, in short those whose immigrant origins had been obscured, whose heritage as Anglo-Saxons was thought of not so much as an ethnicity, but as a norm. Ironically, the region's developers sought to attract such folk by trading heavily on the "foreign" elements that endowed the area's particular allure. But they employed an exotic and unknowable Spanish-Mediterranean pastiche disconnected from the Mexicans living in the present-day city to create that charm.[32] Charles Lummis was a progenitor of what would later become known as the Sunbelt theory. A writer, city editor for the *Los Angeles Times*, and founder and editor of the journal *Land of Sunshine* (later *Out West; Los Angeles and Her Makers*), Lummis helped spread the word that the country's future lay in the sun-drenched region of the Southwest.[33] Like others employed by the *Los Angeles Times*'s owner, Harrison Gray Otis, Lummis devoted a good deal of his prodigious energy to emphasizing Southern California as the new center of the region: "the new Eden of the Saxon homeseeker."[34] Lummis declared that "the ignorant, hopelessly un-American type of foreigner which

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[32] The immigration that transformed Los Angeles from a city that in 1900 contained a population composed of three fourth's native born whites to one with the country's second largest number of people classified as "non-white" derived overwhelmingly from the arrival of Mexicans, see Fogelson, 75-84.

[33] *Land of Sunshine* was founded and edited by Charles Lummis from 1895-1909. It was originally published under the financial auspices of the LACC and conceived as promotional literature to be sent to the Midwest and East but eventually became a leading outlet for Los Angeles intellectuals and for the promotion of the Southwest in general and LA in particular. Good discussions of Lummis include Starr, 75-91; Gerald Nash, *American West in the Twentieth Century*, (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1977), 49-62; Edwin Bingham, *Charles F. Lummis, Editor of the Southwest* (San Marino: Huntington Library, 1955). I do not mean to suggest that Lummis coined the term "sunbelt theory" that came into use much later. For a good discussion of the idea and its significance among urban historians of the West, see Gerald Nash, *Creating the West* (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1991), 192-4.

[34] Starr, 76.

infests and largely controls Eastern cities," was "almost unknown" in Los Angeles.[35] Here at last, Lummis prophesized, Anglo-Saxon homeowners might luxuriate in a warm climate without degenerating into a state of pleasure seeking hedonism.

Lummis's likening of European immigrants to a vermin infestation at first seems somewhat incongruous—especially given his important role in venerating the Southwest's Indian and Spanish heritage. But to promoters like Lummis, the non-Anglo populations of Southern California were entirely different from the Southern and Eastern Europeans settling in cities of the Midwest and Northeast. "His" people, after all, were the West's ancestral occupants, occupants whose influence men like he strictly controlled. Lummis employed, and helped to create, a regional folk culture that endowed the Southland with an altogether separate history that promised Midwestern newcomers a different, sun-filled future. Such an attitude relegated the present influence of Indian and Spanish cultures to one of ornamentation, an aesthetic blueprint for the region's architecture and place names, a set of stories around which to organize pageants and parades. The foreign populations of modern Los Angeles, in other words, were understood by the native Anglo majority as providing the romantic element in the region's pastoral history. Or, in the case of Mexicans, as the "non-white" tenders of its agrarian present.[36] Part of the appeal of Los Angeles, the region's center and a new capital of America's developing empire, was that the city could draw on such resources without having to engage in the fight for cultural power and political control being conducted in the East. Los Angeles beckoned, in short, as the ideal environment for

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[35] Lummmis quoted in Ibid., 89.
[36] In 1930, the Bureau of the Census re-classified Mexicans from white to non-white. See Fogelson, 82.

recently rural Midwesterners to create a modern version of an old success story, promising the comforts of a city by the sea without corrupting the virtues of their country.

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Multiple dynamics drive the development of great cities. The promotion of Los Angeles as a haven for Midwestern emigrants involved the envisioning of a glorified county seat. Such emigrants sought neither a traditional metropolis nor a boomtown—with the roaring disorder, attendant polyglot unruliness, and public partnering in close quarters that such environments implied. As with all great expectations, the Los Angeles they got was different than the one imagined. Between 1910 and 1920 the city grew faster than all others on the Pacific Coast combined, passing the million soul mark and San Francisco as the West's largest city just after 1920.[37] With the astonishing speed that seemed to mark Los Angeles as the twentieth century's child, the city vaulted into position as the century's first new American metropolis; a metropolis designed along different, sprawling suburban lines. During this period of tremendous expansion, a group with a different outlook on the city's future fractured the modern founders' initial vision of what Los Angeles should become. Despite possessing an image that had carefully distinguished the city from the Bay Area, Los Angeles took on the character of another gold rush. But this time the mother lode was the moving picture business. In many minds across the country, for better and worse, the rise of Los Angeles was inextricable from its development as the "Capital of Movie-land."[38] And so the adventurers who

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[37] Thompson, 16-17.

[38] "In the Capital of Movie-Land," *The Literary Digest* (November 10, 1917): 82-9. This was the first article indexed under "Hollywood" in the *Readers' Guide to Periodical Literature* (Minneapolis: H.W. Wilson Co). For other national publications that tied the growth of Los Angeles to the film industry, see William Allen Johnston, "In Motion

came to Southern California with an interest in making and breaking into pictures began a contest over cultural influence played out not just within the city, but along the new frontier of mass culture.

The women and men who came to Los Angeles to make moving pictures were hardly immune to the "Come to California" campaign that had attracted Midwesterners and tourists alike.[39] The promise of year-round sunshine also drew directors, actors, producers, and technicians when short days and cold settled upon the original film centers of Chicago and New York.[40] The first picture studio, Selig Polyscope Company, known to have shot in Los Angeles left Chicago in the midst of a typically brutal winter in 1907; that same year the Orange Train first tantalized Iowans.[41] But it was the explosion of the nickelodeon industry's popularity—and its corresponding shift to a different set of

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Picture Land," *Everybody's Magazine* vol. 33 no. 4 (October 1915):437-8; "The Romance of Making the 'Movies,'" *The Literary Digest*, October 23, 1915, 90-3; "The 'Movie' As An Industry," *The Literary Digest* (October 16, 1917): 55-62. By 1920, articles spoke of this connection as if it were common knowledge, although writers typically went to great lengths to establish the ties for readers. See, "A Visit to Movieland the Film Capital of the World—Los Angeles," *The Forum* 63 (January 1920):17-18; "The Jazzy, Money-Mad Spot Where Movies Are Made," *The Literary Digest* (March 6, 1921): 17-29.

[39] On the "Come to California" campaign, see Leo Rosten, *Hollywood: The Movie Colony, The Movie Makers (*New York; Harcourt, Brace and Company, Inc., 1941), 19. According to the 1910 census, LA's pop of 319,198 was augmented by approximately 150,000 tourists. Cited in Eileen Bowser, *The Transformation of Cinema, 1907-15, vol. 2, History of the American Cinema* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1990), 159.

[40] Early film historiography on why the industry ended up in Los Angeles has largely ignored how the larger social context of the region helped make it an obvious choice.

[41] For the first film historian's claim that Selig was the first company known to have shot in LA, see Ramsaye, Terry. *A Million and One Nights.* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1954, rpt.1926.), 532-2. The story was picked up by many others, including Kenneth MacGowan, *Behind the Screen* (New York: Dell, 1965), 138-9; Robert Sklar, *Movie-Made America* (Vintage: New York, 1976), 67.

exhibition and production norms—that sent most in the business on the road.[42] After 1908, the turn to producing fictional "story films" led to a demand for finding locations with sweep enough to sustain attention during the increasingly longer, more complicated scenarios enacted on celluloid.[43] By that year, keeping up with the competitor next door in cities like Chicago and New York required a daily program adjustment to satisfy the "nickel madness" that had spread across the land.[44] The omnivorous demand, day after day, from thousands of nickelodeon exhibitors nationwide left producers scrambling for new material.[45] In a pinch for new product, many realized that story pictures seemed to best satisfy the tastes of their diverse audience.[46] Story pictures were also more reliable to manufacture since they could create their own dramatic incidents.[47] The production

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[42] The nickelodeon period refers approximately to the period between 1905 and 1914. After 1914, most agree that a different set of exhibition, production, and stylistic norms had largely taken hold.

[43] On the industry's shift to fictional "story" films, see Bowser, 53-5; Robert C. Allen, *Vaudeville and Film, 1895-1915* (New York: Arno Press, 1980), 127-8, 212-3. Allen's analysis of copyrighted titles found a dramatic shift to fictional narratives from 1907-8. Copyrighted titles of sport, travel, and documentary shorts along with newsreels comprised 86.9% of production before 1906; by 1908 the production of dramatic story films rose from 17% to 66%.

[44] On the practice of daily change and problems with satisfying demand, see Bowser, 18, 22-6. (*Harper's Weekly* [1907] quoted, 1)

[45] Months after beginning publishing in 1907, the first periodical devoted entirely to the business of moving pictures, *Moving Picture World*, estimated that between 2,500 and 3000 nickelodeons existed; little more than a year later an Oakland newspaper put the total at 8,000, Ibid., 4. For one "conservative" estimate of a 26 million weekly in attendance in 1910, see 86. Russell Merritt, "Nickelodeon Theatres, 1905-14" in Tino Balio ed., *The American Film Industry* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1976), 86.

[46] On the role that audience demand played in the shift, see Charles Musser, *Before the Nickelodeon* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1991). Musser's evidence suggests that story films were actually what drew audiences from the start, but it took producers a few years to catch on.

[47] On how the new director centered mode of production arose in part as a means to rationalize production in order to satisfy this demand, see David Bordwell, Janet Staiger,

companies that sprung up in response sought locations that could elicit gasps as effectively as the new kinds of movies sent pulses racing when projected on the screen. "How far will a modern motion picture company go to get the 'atmosphere' for a film drama*?" The New York Dramatic Mirror* wondered in 1910.[48] The answer, it turned out, was far away indeed.[49] At first, Los Angeles was only one destination among many. American film crews roved west, south and overseas to avoid productions blighted by "Jersey scenery," a term the *Mirror* coined for pictures attempting to foist fake locations on eyes grown more sophisticated at discerning the real thing.[50]

Yet Los Angeles quickly wrested a commitment from these peripatetic folk. The city earned the loyalty of early motion pictures makers for several tangible reasons, and a few as evanescent as the light. First there was land, which offered the camera's eye not just unparalleled variety, but each thing in a seemingly ideal form. Within a day of Los Angeles, a crew might access much more than an equivalent of New Jersey's worn mountains, the mastered Atlantic, or what woodlands still remained in the East. Southern California served up to the camera's eye craggy, snow capped mountains that tumbled down to meet the unbounded Pacific, forests of redwoods—the tallest and oldest trees on Earth—and trumped with hundreds of miles of beach, uninhabited islands, canyons, and desert scorched and dust laden enough to satisfy the most critical eye. As Colonel Selig, of Selig Polyscope, later trumpeted, "nowhere, but in the real West could the proper

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and Kristin Thompson, *The Classical Hollywood Cinema* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1985), 121-22.

[48] *New York Dramatic Mirror* (1910) quoted in Bowser, 153.

[49] New York studios tried Florida, IMP tried Cuba, Kalem went to Ireland. New Orleans, San Francisco, and Colorado were also tested as production locations. See Bordwell, 122; Bowser 151-155

[50] Quoted in Boswer, 155.

atmosphere and wide vistas have been found."[51] Next came the light, whose color and constancy lived up to the best advertisements, the most lyrical description penned by Bancroft or his like.[52] The sun shone, as *Moving Picture World* reported in 1910, an average of 320 days a year.[53] Its illumination was so vibrant that sheets of muslin were sometimes needed to diffuse the intensity of the rays.[54] Such indigenous plenty acted as critical natural resources for picture companies that, in producer Adolph Zukor's words, "could not produce fast enough to satisfy the market."[55]

Motion pictures also benefited from advantages that spoke to the efforts of local leaders to attract much needed commercial development to the region. The S&P railroad and the city's electric trolley system offered transportation services with both a national and immediate reach.[56] Ever expanding roads provided automobiles access to sprawling suburbs that promised cheap real estate and room for studio construction.[57] And finally,

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[51] Ibid., 122.
[52] On how increased their production schedule and the sunshine sent Famous Players to Los Angles, see Adolph Zukor with Dale Kramer, *The Public Is Never Wrong* (New York: Van Rees Press, 1953), 100.
[53] Statistic quoted in Bordwell, 122.
[54] On using canvas as diffusers, see William Demille, *Hollywood Saga* (New York: E. P. Dutton & Co, 1939), 52.
[55] Zukor, 121. On how Los Angelenos called picture people "Sun Worshippers," see Jesse Lasky with Don Weldon, *I Blow My Own Horn* (Garden City, NY: Doubleday & Company, 1957), 96.
[56] Access to transportation was critical to effectively distribute films to exchanges nationwide. On the city's interurban transportation system, see Fogelson 85-94.
[57] Like most in Los Angeles, movie business folks were early and fervent devotees of the automobile. Howard R. Lamar, *The New Encyclopedia of the American West* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1998), notes that by 1920 the city possessed the largest percentage of passenger car ownership in the world, 652. On the early lure of cheap land prices and barns, see Zukor for Famous-Players, 100-3; Lasky for Lasky Feature Players Company, 94-6, 122; Cecil B. DeMille, *The Autobiography of Cecil B. DeMille* Donald Hayne ed., (Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall, 1959), 77-81; Mack Sennett with Cameron Shipp, *King of Comedy* (Garden City, NY: Doubleday and Company, 1954), for Keystone, 63-64.

the rapid growth of the city and its large Mexican population meant that both skilled and unskilled workers abounded The implacable hostility of business leaders organized in the Merchants and Manufacturing Association toward unions, coupled with the mistrust of many rural Midwesterners toward organized labor, gave the city a national reputation as a bastion of the open shop, one as legendary as it was deserved by the teens.[58] The sum of these natural and commercial advantages succeeded in relocating the center of American film production to Los Angeles in short order. Few in motion pictures had yet ventured to Los Angeles in 1910. By 1915, industry papers estimated the city produced between 62.5 and 75 percent of domestic films; by 1922 the figure had risen to 84 percent.[59] The new business of motion pictures and the new city of Los Angeles had grown up, together, virtually overnight.[60]

Such imposing statistics belie the countrified environment that those who worked in Los Angeles's earliest picture studios confronted. The vast majority of picture people came from established cities, even before their work required residence in the first film centers of Chicago and New York.[61] As quickly as Los Angeles had expanded beyond its humble pueblo beginnings, what met the eyes of future flapper star, Colleen Moore,

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[58] On the city's widespread reputation as a bastion of the open shop, see Fogelson, 128-31; Louis B. Perry and Richard S. Perry, *A History of the Los Angeles Labor Movement* (Berkeley and Los Angles: University of California Press, 1963), 16-21; 23, 30, 37-8, 73-5; Laurie Pintar, "Behind the Scenes" in Tom Sitton and William Deverell eds., *Metropolis in the Making* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2001), 319-324.
[59] Figures from *Moving Picture World* and *Motion Picture News* cited in see Richard Koszarski, *An Evening's* Entertainment (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1991), 102, 104.
[60] On the industry's size as a proportion of the economy in Los Angeles, see Kevin Starr, *Material Dreams* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1990), 98.
[61] On the vastly urban origins of this generation of movie folk, see Lary May, *Screening Out the Past* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1980), 188, Appendix II, table IV.

appeared distinctly as "still more country than town."[62] After five full days on the train from New York, some film folks felt they had traveled to a distant frontier indeed. "Our film caravan arrived like a band of hardy pioneers in the thinly populated village of Los Angeles with its eucalyptus, palms, and heady orange blossoms," remembered Mary Pickford, the woman soon to be dubbed the Queen of the Movies.[63] Future glamour queen Gloria Swanson remembered the environment in less fragrant terms. When driven "around for a look at Los Angeles" after arriving from her hometown and workplace of Chicago in 1914, Swanson pronounced, "There was not much to see. The city seemed to be composed entirely of factories, empty lots, gas stations, telephone wires, drug stores, open markets, and barns."[64] Future star-scenarist and native San Franciscan Anita Loos judged the city a "dilapidated suburb."[65] Finding the suburb that housed a particular studio could prove a challenge, as producer Jesse Lasky discovered when he tried to locate the company that bore his name. "I arrived at the old Sante Fe Depot in Los Angeles, called a taxi, and told the driver I wanted to go to Hollywood," Lasky recalled.[66] "He gave me a puzzled look but said, 'Get in, boss—we'll find it.'" Down "a dirt road with a row of pepper trees" the driver finally found Hollywood and the "old barn" that housed the Jesse L. Lasky Feature Play Company.

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[62] Colleen Moore, *Silent Star* (New York: Doubleday & Company, 1968), 10. Moore arrived in 1917.
[63] Mary Pickford, *Sunshine and Shadow* (Garden City, NY: Doubleday & Company, 1954), 77. Pickford first traveled to Los Angeles in 1910 with the Biograph.
[64] Gloria Swanson, *Swanson on Swanson*, (New York: Random House, 1980), 46.
[65] Anita Loos, *A Girl Like I* (New York: The Viking Press, 1966), 76.
[66] Lasky, 94-95.

The arrival of the "flickers," or "movies," as some called the pioneers in the infant industry, created tensions among residents and business leaders in Los Angeles.[67] Composed of a varied lot of ambitious theatrical types and entrepreneurs from around the world, the roots of virtually all the men and women who became the most powerful and visible members of the movie colony in Los Angeles were working class; many had also been raised as Catholics or Jews. Such attributes were hardly surprising, given the industry's fledgling, slightly disreputable character and early popularity among the urban, often immigrant, working classes. More unusually, but probably also tied in part to its juvenile rank, the business prominently employed a large number of women in all aspects of the business. These women's work and styles often squarely placed them among the period's much discussed "New Women;" the independent behavior and fashion sense of this type had challenged established feminine conventions and attracted mounting public commentary since the century's turn.[68]

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[67] Both the "movies" and the "flickers" were early terms that lost favor as the business evolved from the nickelodeon era to features. See Lasky, "The Flickers Become Respectable," 112-120; Terry Ramsaye, *A Million and One Nights*, (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1925), 550-2. Ramsaye, a participant observer noted the distaste for "movie" and "movies." Actress Lillian Gish claimed that director D.W. Griffith forbid the use of the popular slang on set, Lillian Gish, *Dorothy and Lillian Gish* (New York: Scribner's, 1973), 60. After 1916 the Los Angeles City Clerk's Office, Records and Management Division, City Archives (hereafter CALA) provide good examples of these tensions, suggesting the walls around the first studios were built to allay the complaints of those without as much as to protect those within. See particularly, File 614, 1916; File 387, 1917; File 2619, 1918; File 1000, 1918.

[68] Treatments that investigate women's new goals and shifting societal standards in "manners and morals" during the pre-war period include, James McGovern, "The American Woman's Pre-World War I Freedom in Manners and Morals," *Journal of American History* 55.2 (1968): 315; Kathy Peiss, *Cheap Amusements* (Philadelphia, Temple University Press, 1986); Nancy F. Cott, *The Grounding of Modern Feminism* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1987); Janet Staiger, *Bad Women* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1995); Susan Glenn, *Female Spectacle; The Theatrical Roots of Modern Feminism* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2000). Other

In short, these were just the sort of folks that many of the non-movie residents already settled into the city's suburban bungalows hoped to avoid. Frances Marion, a young hopeful who traveled alone from her native San Francisco to find work in the industry in 1912, testified to the troubles that developed. Marion called the "City of the Queen of the Angels" "California's floating kidney transplanted from the Midwest."[69] To Marion, the transplant created a Los Angeles that differed dramatically from the "cosmopolitan" San Francisco she had left behind. Marion—who would quickly command the highest salary paid to a scenario writer in the business—recalled confronting landlords who baldly declared, "No Jews, actors, or dogs allowed" in her search for an apartment.[70] After quickly realizing how much business the industry generated, local business leaders in the Los Angeles Chamber of Commerce offered the flickers their cautious support.[71] But more visible were the fearful actions of neighborhood associations that petitioned the City Council to prevent studios from building near their own backyards.[72] King Vidor, who came from Texas to Los Angeles in 1915 with the hope of becoming a director, thought the chilly welcome his cohort met would have been duplicated in many other American towns. After all, the flickers "spoke a silent language, a different language from the orange growers who surrounded them,"

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important treatments of the contests that arose over the rise of new cultural standards include, Henry May, *End of American Innocence* (Chicago: Quadrangle Books, 1959); Lewis Ehrenberg, *Steppin' Out* (Westport: Greenwood Press, 1981); T. J. Jackson Lears, *No Place of Grace* (New York: Pantheon Books, 1981).

[69] Frances Marion, *Off With Their Heads!* (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1972), 2. On Marin's career, see Cari Beauchamp, *Without Lying Down* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1997).

[70] Marion, 2. See also, Gloria Swanson, *Swanson on Swanson* (New York: Random House, 1980), 139.

[71] File 2619, 1918, CALA; Motion Picture File 2035 to be known as 2723, 1921, CALA.

[72] File 387, 1917, CALA; File 1000, 1918, CALA.

but "felt camaraderie with all the other members of their clan."[73] This social insularity, the experience of living in what Vidor called "a magic bubble," was clearly as much cultivated as imposed. Yet whatever the origin, it encouraged those in the picture business—those men and women who would fashion Hollywood out of this frontier by the sea—to think "they could establish their own habits and behavior." Like many memoirs written by early Hollywood's creators, Vidor attested to how in the process of exploring "the mysteries inherent in this art" the movies explored behavior that might be called outlandish, immoral, or glamorously modern depending upon one's point of view.

And, indeed, as Vidor suggested, during the nickelodeon period, local actions to regulate motion pictures became commonplace in many other cities and towns across the country. Virtually from the first, and certainly long before the feature era and Hollywood took hold, many expressed concerns about the moral and physical dangers presented to the audiences who supported the business. By the time the Supreme Court handed down *Mutual Film Corporation v. Ohio Industrial Commission* in 1915, Americans had been arguing about how best to police the industry and its product for nearly ten years.[74] The *Mutual* case established that the movies were to be the only medium of communication in

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[73] King Vidor quoted in Scott Berg, *Goldwyn* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1989), 105.
[74] *Mutual Film Corporation v. Ohio Industrial Commission*, 236 US 230 (1915) (hereafter *Mutual*).
For an insightful reading of how the decision reflected the desire to impose a "pure version" "Protestant Americanism" on screens, see Garth Jowett, "'A Capacity for Evil': The 1915 Supreme Court *Mutual* Decision," *Historical Journal of Film, Television, and Radio* 9.1 (1989): 59-78. Jowett limits his focus to the ethnic and religious undertones of the struggle, ignoring the centrality of how they played out specifically around the topic of sexual obscenity. On this point, see Edward deGrazia and Roger Newman, *Banned Films* (New York: R.R. Bowker Company, 1982); Richard Randall, *Censorship of the Movies* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1968), 18-24;

the United States ever subjected to prior restraint censorship, which allowed the prescreening, cutting, and licensing of films before the public ever saw a foot of celluloid.[75] Chicago had pointed the way toward this approach when it passed the first film censorship law in 1907, requiring a police permit for every moving picture shown.[76] Like the laws that followed in countless other cities and towns in the nickelodeon period, police licensing was often used to remove scenes of violent crimes.[77] In these years in which many perceived males of the immigrant, working class as dominating movie audiences, the actions also indicated that—in addition to the safety issues posed by fire-trap theaters—the question of how films might impact the behavior of immigrant boys

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[75] *Mutual*, 242, 244. On prior restraint, see Randall, 18-25.

[76] Kathleen McCarthy, "Nickel Vice and Virtue; Movie Censorship in Chicago, 1907-1915," *Journal of Popular Film* 5.1 (1976): 37-55.

[77] DeGrazia and Newman, 7-9. My account of the film censorship movement owes the most to legal scholar DeGrazia, sociologist Randall, and the film historian Lee Grieveson, *Policing Cinema* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2004). Grieveson's important new history argues that regulating the movie industry was bound up the desire to reproduce, and reinforce, the cultural dominance of white middle class social conventions associated with respectability. He argues that the stylistic and industrial norms associated with "classical Hollywood cinema" were determined by legal struggles ending with *Mutual*. After 1915 he asserts that the function of classical Hollywood cinema was to offer audiences "harmless and culturally affirmative entertainment that would not pretend to the loftier purposes of the press or to the purpose of cultural negation that post-romantic theory accorded to the category of 'art." Though I find Grieveson's careful reading of efforts to regulate films compelling, I do not agree with his functionalist interpretation regarding the impact of drives to regulate cinema that seems too neatly timed to coincide with the emergence of "classical Hollywood cinema" in 1915. Interestingly, the author's evidence suggests some of the limitations of his argument, namely, how the drives to regulate the industry peaked after the war. The author also falls prey to treating both "entertainment" and "Hollywood cinema" as stable, transparent concepts whose meanings lay outside the shifting pressures of historical context and contingency. This is an especially precarious way to proceed since "Hollywood cinema" lacked definition in the period under his purview Hollywood was not yet even a term. It also ignores how producers did not bow to systematic regulation until the Production Code of 1934. The book ignores the impact of another commercial imperative under which the industry operated: the need to appeal to audiences.

was an overriding concern.[78] Two shorts entirely suppressed in 1908, *The James Boys in Missouri* and *Night Riders*, demonstrated the police's emphasis on censoring images that depicted criminal behavior involving violence, murder and the destruction of property.[79]

The revised censorship law that Chicago passed in 1914 reflected both the perception that the audience supporting films had changed and the enlarged objectives of those interested in using the law to reshape the content of films. Chicago's decision to replace its police board with a ten person commission of salaried civilians—composed equally of women and men—indicated a new focus on employing experts capable of enforcing proper sexually morality.[80] Clearly this was a more delicate task than simply identifying and excising scenes of criminal misconduct. The next year, the Supreme Court's *Mutual* decision displayed a similar trend in concerns. Perhaps the most compelling and defensible aspect of *Mutual* was its reasoning that the medium's special

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[78] The standard interpretation of the movies in the nickelodeon period considers them primarily a working class form of entertainment, but as widespread, reliable statistics are difficult to come by the class based nature of the audience has sparked much controversy. My point is that public perception and debate considered them so, a fact that anyone reading in the periodicals of the day confronts. For those who argue audiences were primarily working class see, Joseph H. North, *The Early Development of the Motion Picture, 1887-1909* (New York: Arno, 1973), 239; Sklar, 3, 14-20, Roy Rosenzweig, *Eight Hours for What We Will* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1983); Ben Singer, "Manhattan Nickelodeons: New Data on Audiences and Exhibitors," *Cinema Journal* 35.3 (1996): 3-35; Ben Singer, "Manhattan Melodrama," *Cinema Journal* 36.4 (1997): 107-112; ; David Nasaw, *Going Out* (New York: Basic Books, 1993), 174-8. For revisionists see, Merritt, "Nickelodeon Theatres, 1905-1914," 59-79; Robert C. Allen, "Motion Picture Exhibition in Manhattan, 1906-12," *Cinema Journal* 18.2 (1979): 2-15; Robert C. Allen, "Manhattan Myopia; or Oh! Iowa!" *Cinema Journal* 35.3 (1996): 75-103; Sumiko Higashi, "Dialogue: Manhattan Nickelodeons," *Cinema Journal* 35.3 (1996): 72-73; Judith Thissen, "Oy, Myopia!" *Cinema Journal* 36.4 (1997): 107-17.

[79] *The James Boys in Missouri* (Essnay 1908); *Night Riders* (Kalem 1908). This decision produced *Block v. City of Chicago* 87 N.E. 1011 (1909). The decision made it clear it was mostly worried about young men and boys from the lower classes getting the wrong ideas about crime.

[80] McCarthy, 48-53; De Grazia, 8-9; Randall, 20-1.

"capacity for evil"—in this case, its special ability to influence sexual morality—justified placing it under special control.[81] Speaking for a unanimous Court, Justice McKenna's opinion was suffused with fears about the movies' "promiscuous" crowds—"not of women alone, nor of men alone, but together"—who viewed "things which should not have pictorial representation in public places" because "prurient interest might be excited and appealed to."[82] After 1915, many reformers interested in legally controlling the content of films focused on protecting the movies' diverse population of fans—men and women, middle and working class, young and old, immigrant and native born—from "indecent" or "sexually immoral" images. By 1920, when the industry had coalesced around Los Angeles, "immorality and obscenity" had become the "keywords" defining the efforts of the four state film censorship boards, and virtually all the municipal boards, in existence.[83]

This concern over motion pictures' effect on the morality of audiences exploded over a cycle of movies on the topic of white slavery that peaked between 1913 and 1914.[84] Indeed, the Pennsylvania State Board of Censors first act the following year was to ban white slave pictures.[85] A subject of great controversy in the press and pulpit, the white slavery scare was a nationwide panic over the belief that an international prostitution ring was kidnapping white and immigrant women in order to sell them into

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[81] *Mutual*, 244. The decision was made on three grounds: films were primarily entertainment, wholly made for profit, and possessed a special capacity for evil.
[82] Ibid., 246-7.
[83] Lee Grieveson, "Not Harmless Entertainment," in Charles Keil and Shelley Stamp, *American Cinema's Transitional Era* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2004), 272. Pennsylvania was the first state to pass a state censorship law in 1911, but it did not begin operating until 1915. Between 1916 and 1920, Ohio, Kansas, and Maryland also created state boards modeled on Pennsylvania's law.
[84] Grieveson, *Policing Cinema*, 151-91.
[85] Ibid., 185.

sexual slavery.[86] A muck-raking journalist in Chicago published the first expose on the subject in a 1907 issue of *McClure's Magazine*, charging that "largely Russian Jews" were responsible for selling tens of thousands of women into prostitution.[87] In response, Congress passed the Mann Act in 1910, making it a criminal offense to transport women over state lines for immoral purposes.

Films like *Traffic in Soul*s and *Inside the White Slave Traffic* helped to keep concern over the topic elevated to feverish heights.[88] These melodramatic tales of sexual vice were the industry's earliest feature block-busters.[89] At six reels long, white slave films played for over an hour, cost 25 cents for admission at the motion pictures' new cathedrals in New York, and attracted audiences notably composed of women eager to get a look at the show.[90] Critics outraged over the films charged that they encouraged a more general "Repeal of Reticence" regarding talk about sex, taught men of "the impressionable classes" white slaving techniques, and "pour[ed] oil upon the flames of vice" before "the promiscuous audiences of the motion picture theaters."[91] Equally important, the controversy over these films also led "to the collapse of the effectiveness"

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[86] On the white slavery scare and its effect and use in the movies, see Shelley Stamp, *Movie Struck Girls* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2000), 42-101; Staiger, 120-46.

[87] George Kibbe Turner, "The City of Chicago: A Study of the Great Immoralities," *McClure's Magazine* 28.6 (April 1907): 572-92. Edward J. Barstow, *Prostitution and Prejudice; The Jewish Fight Against White Slavery, 1870-1939* (New York: Schocken Books, 1983). The author describes the widespread perception that Jews were to blame for the problem.

[88] *Traffic in Souls* (Universal 1913); *Inside the White Slave Traffic* (Social Research Corporation 1913).

[89] For a detailed analysis of the content and reception of these two films, see Staiger, 131-46; Stamp, 70-94.

[90] On women's attendance, see Stamp, 69-70, 94-101; Staiger,128-31.

[91] Editorial in *The New York Times* quoted in Stamp, 67. For a statement of the belief that *Traffic in Souls* helped to legitimate talk about sex, see Agnes Repplier, "The Repeal of Reticence," *The Atlantic Monthly* (March 1914).

of the National Board of Censorship (NBC), discrediting the work of the film industry's most important ally.[92] Despite its name, the NBC had been the most significant, and prestigious, proponent of the voluntary regulation of films since 1909, acting as a forum for producers, exhibitors and the general public to reach a consensus about what constituted acceptable motion picture content.[93] The dynamics on display during the controversy over white slave films resurfaced and grew in the volatile postwar social climate. Concerns over the relationship between women's independence, their sexual mores, and Hollywood's new "Orientalized" films, Jewish industry "moguls," and bohemian social environment out West created a compound ripe for combustion. A 1921 sex scandal involving slapstick star Roscoe "Fatty" Arbuckle and "starlet" Virginia Rappe ignited the mix, prompting a crisis of national proportions over young women's relationship to the industry, the foreign, "Un-American" influence of moving pictures' content and leaders, and the nation's native values and moral health.

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Hollywood's coming of age in Los Angeles created an entirely new kind of frontier. As migration to the city peaked during the decade following 1910, the path charted by the adventurers who traveled there set a new course that many others would follow later in the twentieth century. The distinctive patterns of age and sex that had "everywhere and always" drew single, adult male migrants to boomtowns and cities in the past did not shape the City of the Angels' development.[94] In the peopling of Los Angeles, women

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[92] Grieveson, 180.
[93] Charles Matthew Feldman, *The National Board of Censorship (Review) of Motion Pictures, 1909-1922* (Windsor: Arno Press Cinema Program, 1977), 132-54.
[94] Thompson, 88.

kept pace with the men.[95] By 1920, the number of women who followed the city's sprawl into the hills and along the coast slightly surpassed the number of men.[96] Women's abundance in Los Angeles was not the only noteworthy characteristic that showed up on local census maps. Nearly one in five was a "divorcee" or widow, creating a record-braking percentage of wage earning women between the ages of twenty-five and forty-four.[97] Consequently, Los Angeles led the country in the number of women who worked during the years when the demands involved with the bearing and raising of children were the greatest, inaugurating a trend that the United States as a whole would not match for decades.[98]

Though single, out-to-work women come to town looking for adventure, or a salary on which to support a family, were exceptionally visible in Los Angeles, millions of other women cut a similar figure nationwide.[99] Between 1890 and 1930, women

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[95] Ibid., 48-51. SF's sex ratio in 1910 was 125.5 where as LA's was 105.8. Agricultural regions in the state displayed an even greater imbalance in the sex ratio. Interestingly, another peculiarity in the state as a whole was that its typically high sex ratio did not result in higher proportion of married women, 89.

[96] Ibid., LA's sex ratio in 1920 was 97.9, a figure lower than that of the United States' as a whole, 48-9.

[97] Ibid., 17.9 to be precise. On women's marital status, 89-93. Figures for divorced and widowed females in the U.S. stood at 12.4, state of New York, 12.7, State of California, 16.4. On women's participation in the labor force, see 112-5. Thompson notes that "women in this group constituted almost as large a proportion of the female labor force as males of those ages have of the male labor force" and goes so far as to call this "the outstanding age feature of California's female labor force."

[98] Comparable statistics on women's work nationwide can be found in Alice Kessler-Harris, *Out to Work* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1982).

[99] Several of the most famous women in early Hollywood—including Pickford, the Talmadge and Gish sisters, Elsie Janis, Pola Negri, and June Mathis—came from fatherless families and became, through the help of their stage mothers, the family's bread winner. Others like Anita Loos, Frances Marion, Adela Rodgers St. Johns, Gloria Swanson, and Jeanie MacPherson came from unusually progressive ones. Louella Parsons, Elinor Glyn, and Alla Nazimova would fall into the older, divorced, and in the

across the United States took part in what amounted to a demographic revolution. A ream of statistics testified to changes that affected every aspect of their lives. The most visible and widespread departure involved the jump in the number of adult women working for wages, whose total shot from 2.6 to 10.8 million; the rate was twice as fast as the expansion of the adult female population.[100] The end of the 1920s found 25 percent of all adult women, and more than half of single adult women, gainfully employed.[101] As they took jobs in department stores, offices, and social services, for the first time the majority of women—usually those who were white and native born—experienced work as an endeavor that sent them outside the confines of factories or other women's homes.[102]

"Why do they come to the city?" sociologist Frances Donovan wondered of these young adventurers whom anxious commentators and social workers labeled "women adrift."[103] After working undercover alongside Chicago waitresses, Donovan determined

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case of the first two, single mother category. Colleen Moore was the classic star-struck middle class girl whose family pulled strings to get her a start.

[100] Joanne Meyerowitz, *Women Adrift* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1988). The author notes that between 1890 and 1930, "the female labor force grew by 307 percent while the adult female population increased by only 171 percent," xvii., 5

[101] Overall work statistic cited in McGovern, 320. Type of occupation cited in Winifred Wandersee, *Women's Work and Family Values*, (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1981), 90. On this trend generally, and the different options and rates of employment available for white, black, and immigrant women; see Kessler-Harris, chap 5.

[102] On how the proportion of women who worked as domestic servants declined from 47% in 1880 to 33% in 1900 to 22% in 1920" and domestic workers in the 20th century were far less likely to live in their employers' homes, see Meyerowitz, 5. On department stores see, Susan Porter Benson, *Counter Cultures* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1986); On the professions and social services see, Rosalind Rosenberg, *Beyond Separate Spheres* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1982).

[103] Frances Donovan, *The Woman Who Waits* (New York: Arno Press, 1974, rpt. 1920), 9. Donovan found that waitresses spent most of their free time at the movies, in cabarets or restaurants. Again, see Meyerowitz's excellent study of the origin of those called *Women Adrift.* On the "girl problem" and how it developed, in part, because of the

that women made for the city "because life is dull in the small town or on the farm and because there is excitement and adventure in the city." Donovan believed that "the lure of the stage, of the movie, of the shop, and of the office make of it the definite El Dorado of the woman. It is her frontier and in it she is the pioneer." Here the city itself became the precious metal to be mined, capturing the blending of work and play it could suggest to single young women exiting their jobs each evening into the city's world of commercial amusements.[104] No place of entertainment had better symbolized this trend than the dance hall craze of the 1910s. Away from parents' eyes, young women decked out in high heels, make-up, and revealing new styles arrived with friends, paired up with boys, and moved fast or slow, but always close, to ragtime rhythms and dances like the "Turkey Trot," the "Grizzly Bear," and the "Bunny Hug"—names suggesting the dancers' imitation of animals' uninhibited ways.[105] Created in Southern brothels and juke joints that first employed the black musicians who brought it north, the music "demanded a physical response."[106] The dances set to it sought to incite sexual longing. Free-wheeling, sexually mixed social spaces like commercial dance halls also encouraged

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difficulty of separating new behavior and sexy styles from sexual activity see, Regina Kunzel, *Fallen Women, Problem Girls* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1993); Ruth Alexander, *The 'Girl Problem'* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1995); Mary Odem, *Delinquent Daughters* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1995).

[104] On how the city's commercial entertainment industries transformed the pleasure seeking habits of young women at the turn of the century see, Roy Rosensweig, *Eight Hours for What We Will* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1983), 197-8, 202; Elizabeth Ewen, *Immigrant Women in the Land of Dollars* (New York: Monthly Review Press, 1985), 208-24; Peiss, 140-53; Miriam Hansen, *Babel and Babylon* (Cambridge, Harvard University Press, 1991), 60-126; Nasaw, 201-02, 231-2; Lauren Rabinovitz, *For the Love of Pleasure* (New Brunswick, Rutgers University Press, 1998), 105-77. In general, my understanding of this peer culture is particularly indebted to discussions found in Peiss, Meyerowitz, Ehrenberg, and Nasaw.

[105] On dance halls culture, see Peiss, 88-114; Ehrenberg, 111-175; Nasaw, 104-119

[106] Quoted in D'Emilio and Freedman, 195.

an open display of eroticism, challenging cultural codes associated with Anglo-Saxon gentility about the place of passion in public life and what constituted respectable feminine behavior and display.[107] "The way the women dress today they all look like prostitutes," a waiter reported to one of many vice investigators who cruised dance halls looking for the prostitutes such environments were thought to breed.[108]

And, in fact, the new place these women purchased in public dramatically challenged notions about who constituted "public women"—formerly the term for prostitutes—and made the "girl problem" a hot topic of debate among Progressive reformers. "Problem girl" was a sort of catch-all label given by social workers to young, wage earning women whose behavior and styles grew out of, and around, modern urban commercial culture. The sexy appearance that such women cultivated and their independent participation in public culture created, quite simply, a new problem with girls. Increasingly, young workers defined their images in ways that openly contradicted middle class definitions of respectable femininity, using their earnings to buy shorter, slinky dresses to wear to "places where the dancing floor is good, there are always plenty of men, and there are laughter and liberty galore."[109] In bold-faced attempts to refashion and redefine themselves, these women also began to experiment freely with the use of cosmetics, a product previously reserved for actresses and prostitutes.[110] Like actresses, their behavior disrupted previous conventions that had allowed observers, visually, to

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[107] Ehrenberg, 111-175.
[108] Quoted in Peiss, 98.
[109] Belle Lindner Isreals, "The Way of the Girl," *Survey* 22 (July 3, 1909): 488.
[110] Until the early twentieth century only prostitutes had commonly worn make-up, cosmetics then made inroads among actresses and working class women, later spreading to the middle class. See, Kathy Peiss, *Hope in a Jar* (New York: Henry Holt and Company, 1998) 27-29, 47-50, 53-6.

define and separate good girls from the bad. But what working class women may have experienced as "vistas of autonomy, romance, and pleasure," many social workers judged, "promiscuous sexuality and inappropriate delinquent behavior."[111] The result: seemingly all at once, and for the first time, a sizable number of young women were deemed delinquents, sexual aggressors who needed the supervision of state authorities in the juvenile courts and homes constructed to deal with their transgressions.[112]

Working women and problem girls were at the center of the film industry's expanding fan base in the years surrounding the Great War, the years in which "Hollywood" came to symbolize an industry, a social environment, and a way of life in the public's perception.[113] Accounts of the transition during the 1910s from the

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[111] Kunzel, 58. Kunzel focuses on the gendered nature of delinquency as constructed by largely female social workers in this period, noting that "female delinquents were, almost by definition, 'immoral,' and sex delinquency was perceived to be, also by definition, female." For an excellent analysis of the development of juvenile courts in Los Angeles see, Mary Odem, "City Mothers and Delinquent Daughters: Female Juvenile Justice in Early Twentieth Century Los Angles," in William Deverell and Tom Sitton, eds., *California Progressivism Revisited* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1994).

[112] Meyerowitz and Kunzel both note a shift in public discourse during the 1910s that moved from considering these women as victims of male sexual predators to assuming that the women had become the predators.

[113] Some of linked the movies cultural ascendance and transformation during the half-decade before 1920 has been tied to the industry's campaign to build its female audience in order to increase its respectability. While this may have been part of the idea this dissertation agrees not only with author's like Stamp, Staiger and Miriam Hansen, *Babel and Babylon* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1991), who demonstrate the ways in which actual women audience members contradicted this idea, but also holds that the increasingly female audience was connected to how women in the early industry were freer to entice female viewers through means that represented aspects of their own unconventional lives and the period's broader engagement with feminist concerns. Reliable statistics are not available on audience composition, but authors who note or explore how the industry came to view women as both their "ideal" and most "fanatic" members in both the U.S. and Europe between 1920s-1950s, see Richard Maltby and Ian Craven, *Hollywood Cinema* (Oxford: Blackwell Publishing Ltd., 1995), 10, 89. For the

nickelodeon era to the age of the silent picture feature—or early Hollywood—have long detailed a dramatic audience shift that centers on class and ethnicity.[114] When the story about the period in which Hollywood became Hollywood gets told, too often it has left out how this happened by attracting an audience whose sex was their most noteworthy characteristic.[115] During the nickelodeon period, many calculated that women were a negligible presence in the audience.[116] By the early twenties, some estimated they occupied seventy-five percent of seats.[117] Such estimates were most likely inflated; reliable statistics on the question are scarce. Yet, during the half-decade before 1920, theatre promotions offering everything from child care to beauty products, fan magazines

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most complete description of how Hollywood attracted female audience members in the 1910s, see Stamp, 10-40. On the reorientation of fan magazines like *Photoplay* to women readers, see Kathryn Fuller, *At the Picture Show* (Washington: Smithsonian Institution Press, 1996). On the widespread perception of women's dominance as fans, see Gaylyn Studlar, "The Perils of Pleasure: Fan Magazine Discourse as Women's Commodified Culture," *Wide Angle* 13.1 (1991): 6-33; Melvyn Stokes, "The Female Audience of the 1920s and early 1930s," in Melvyn Stokes and Richard Maltby eds., *American Movie Audiences* (London: British Film Institute, 1999), 42-44. On a survey and newspaper reports that suggest the shift, see Koszarski, 29-30. Again, much like the debate over whether Jews controlled the movies, or how much of the audience was working class during the nickelodeon period, the widespread perception of this fact, rather than a specific statistic interests me.

[114] For those who focus mostly on the class, see North; Sklar; Rosenzweig; Singer, "Manhattan Nickelodeons,"; Singer, "Manhattan Melodrama." For the most recent, and possibly romantic, version of this approach which completely ignores women and gender, see Steven Ross, *Working Class Hollywood* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1998). Lary May's work, though somewhat justifiably attacked for factual inaccuracies, provides an interesting exception, attempting to balance the impact of ethnic, class, and gender conflicts and social change.

[115] Important exceptions that treat gender as central to the transitional period include Staiger; Stamp; Hansen; Marjorie Rosen, *Popcorn Venus* (New York: Avon, 1976); Anthony Slide, *The Silent Feminists* (Lantham, NY: The Scarecrow Press, 1996); Ally Acker, *Reel Women* (New York: Continuum Publishing Company, 1991); Gaylyn Studlar, *This Mad Masquerade; Stardom and Masculinity in the Jazz Age* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1996); Jennifer M. Bean and Diane Negra, *A Feminist Reader in Early Cinema* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2002).

[116] Boswer, 2-3.

[117] *Photoplay* (November 1924) quoted in Studlar, "Perils of Pleasure."

promising to put young hopefuls on the path to stardom, and story lines focused on the dashing and seductive exploits of women and men on screens, all displayed the effort to design a fan culture that tempted feminine tastes. Many came to believe the industry's good fortune demanded catering to the female trade. In order to make a wish into a reality, decisions were often made according to the desires of an idealized, "fanatic" female film spectator.[118]

By the early twenties, however, Hollywood's efforts to attract young women had perhaps succeeded too well. The movie industry became entwined with controversy surrounding such women. Not only had movie theatres become one of the most popular spots for youths to gather, but growing numbers began to hold the movies themselves, the actresses they featured, and the fan culture that publicized both, accountable for celebrating, and even creating, young women's new styles and customs. To some reformers, the idea that too many young women had succumbed to an influence beyond their control mattered more than whether fans were pictured as young, immigrant workers requiring proper socialization, or as daughters of the white middle class needing protection. Accordingly, many grew to believe that controlling and protecting young women demanded controlling the movie industry itself. Again, myth and history crossed paths, though in this instance their "special meeting ground" was the urban picture show, where newly out-on-the-town women of all sorts began to blur into the glamorous images flickering across screens.

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[118] For description of the insiders' assumptions about playing to the "Cinderella" trade and, a review of fan mail in the early 30s that demonstrated it overwhelming came from female fans, see Benjamin Hampton, *A History of the Movies* (New York: Dover Publications, 1970, rpt. 1931), 224-6; Rosten, 12-15, Appendix H, "Fan Mail."

The public's favorites had already coalesced into a veritable constellation of stars by the time those in the movie industry settled around Los Angeles. Not yet reigned in by a few tightly controlled studios or by taxes, the most popular performers in early Hollywood wielded authority and amassed wealth with a truly royal hand. The increasingly female audience for the movies selected many deserving of their allegiance, but a disproportionate number of those who earned their most enduring fealty were other women.[119] Involved in all aspects of the business, early Hollywood's women would offer some of the most arresting models of professional advancement available to other women in the early twentieth century. In a trajectory that followed those of other women professionals, their record of influence as actresses, directors, writers, producers, and publicists through the early 1920s would not be equaled until more than half a century later.[120] These women enacted, directed, and produced movies, shaping the infant

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[119] This is a general impression of mine formed by reading in the period that particularly pertains to performers in high profile, prestige products, and does not mean that men were not popular as well. However, when one subtracts Western heroes and comedians from those considered most capable of opening pictures—or worthy of independent producing companies within studios—the list that remains is predominantly the leading ladies of the day. Even with such men, the number of females among the highest paid performers outranked the number of men. For such a list in 1923 see, Koszarski, 116. In autobiographies and interviews with female stars of the period, women consistently note their belief that young women largely supported their popularity. Important contemporary views of this include three of the most important men involved in pioneering feature fiction films and the studio system: Adolph Zukor, Cecil DeMille and Jesse Lasky. A letter from DeMille to Lasky on February 8, 1917 claims that the CA branch of FPL could out perform and better please the public than the NY branch, suggesting an even division of what may be assumed are the companies most important draws in the process. Of the 10 names listed one is male, see letters between Jesse Lasky and Cecil De Mille, in Paolo Cherchi, and Lornzo Codelli, eds., *The DeMille Legacy* (Pordenone: Le Giornate del Cinema Muto, 1991)i, 489-91.

[120] On how the number of female college students and professionals in 1920 would not be equaled until 1960, see William O'Neill, *Everyone Was Brave* (Chicago: Quadrangle Books, 1969), 304-5. On how women's relative salaries and prestige as actresses, and their proportion as screenwriters and producers would not be equaled until the 1980s, see

industry and the new images of femininity and masculinity that it sold. They churned out the publicity that filled newspapers and fan magazines that explained to Americans who mattered to the industry and what the business meant. These women-made-women wrote the stories that encouraged thousands of others to take a chance on finding their fortunes out West. In doing so, they, and those who dreamed of becoming them, turned the social problem of women's growing independence into the pervasive cultural symbol that Hollywood became.

Here, then, was the "Hollywood" born around Los Angeles during the half decade before 1920: in a city that mirrored the larger cultural contests between Anglo-Saxons, immigrants, and problem girls; in the explosion of print which surrounded and produced the first stars and their fans; in the theatres increasingly dominated by young working and middle class women; on screens where new kinds of heroines shaped an ever widening circle of Americans' fantasies and fears. Early Hollywood developed from the collision of these parts. The rise of the movies in Los Angeles offering both a distillation and a dramatic magnification of tensions played-out nationwide, as many countries collided in cities across the land. The handiwork of those in this new West who helped to refashion American culture along the new frontier of mass culture would come under attack for leading the country too far, too fast, down a road it was not sure it wanted to go at all. This dissertation explores the implications of the motion picture industry's trip west and then takes the measure of the impact produced over the birth of early Hollywood.

Acker, 1-8. Notable biographies on the important women in early Hollywood include Beauchamp; Bean and Negra, eds.; Eileen Whitfield, *Pickford* (Lexington: University of Kentucky Press, 1997); Gavin Lambert, *Nazimova* (New York: Knopf, 1997); Michael Morris, *Madame Valentino; The Many Lives of Natacha Rambova* (New York: Abbeville Press, 1991); Joan Hardwick, *Addicted to Romance; The Life and Adventures of Elinor Glyn* (London: Andre Deutsch Ltd., 1994).

Chapter 2.
***"Buffalo Bill's Defunct:" Enter Mary Pickford*[1]**

By 1920, when most in the movie industry had settled around the suburb of Hollywood, one of the Wild West's central heroes was "defunct," as poet E.E. Cummings declared in a poem that year —and in more ways than one. The man born William Cody died in 1917, but his commercial draw as a performer declined much earlier.[2] In his hey-day before 1900, William Cody's celebrity persona of Buffalo Bill became a potent symbol of American men's successful conquest of a continent. First in dime store novels and plays, and later in travelling frontier shows that culminated in the production of Buffalo Bill's Wild West in 1883, Cody's stature traded on savvy publicity that marketed his performances as historical reenactments of his past exploits as Army scout, Indian killer and buffalo hunter. Buffalo Bill and travelling companions like Sitting Bull offered audiences not a show—for it was never called such—but the thing itself: the Wild West. The spectacular displays of horsemanship, sharp shooting, flowing hair, and martial prowess were made all the more powerful because of the seeming transparency of the deeds enacted by the ideally handsome hero. Here, the performance proclaimed, at the barrel of a gun and riding full tilt on a "silver stallion" was how American men had settled the West and established the nation's boundaries from sea to shining sea.

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[1] e.e. cummings's, "III," in "Seven Poems," *The Dial* vol. LXVIII (January 1920): APS Online 23. Buffalo Bill's/ defunct/ who used to/ ride a water smooth-silver/stallion/ and break onetwothreefourfive pigeonsjustlikethat/ Jesus/ he was a handsome man/ and what I want to know is/ how do like your blueeyed boy/ Mister Death.

[2] On the use of Buffalo Bill and his imitators to rationalize white violence and U.S. imperialism, see Richard Slotkin, *Gunfighter Nation* (New York: Atheneum, 1992), 63-87. For a more ambiguous discussion of the meaning of his unequalled popularity, see Joy S. Kasson, *Buffalo Bill's Wild West* (New York: Hill and Wang, 2000), 11-64. On Buffalo Bill as national myth, see David Hamilton Murdoch, *The American West* (Reno: University of Nevada Press, 2001), 39-41.

Composed as the idea of Hollywood was taking root in people's imaginations, Cumming's poem, "III," recorded the passing of an era and the diminishment of its symbols' ability to capture the changed conditions under which many lived and dreamed. Shortly before his death, an attempt Cody made to revive his career on film failed miserably; more than his advanced age was responsible for the failure. For much of the nineteenth century, the challenge of wringing sustenance and order from the tumult of geographic and industrial expansion had found dramatic expression in a particular kind of hero in popular culture: a man valued for the authentic expression of his strong character. Yet as the movie industry took root in Los Angeles, the prestige associated with of one the most classic expression's of this hero—the scout-as-explorer-and-conquistador—had shrunk to fit the B-movie westerns churned out for little boys.[3] In one respect Cody's fame, though faded, displayed an ingredient that would remain essential to celebrity in the twentieth century: the extremely good looks that caused Army generals to endorse him in programs as a "remarkable specimen of manly beauty," or as Cummings gushed in memoriam, "Jesus he was a handsome man."[4] In his prime, Buffalo Bill's face and figure were perfectly suited to meet the staggering verisimilitude that mechanical reproduction

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[3] Randolph Bartlett, "Where Do We Ride From Here?" *Photoplay* (February 1919): 36-7, 109. Though declaring his belief in the future of Westerns, the author notes that "cowboy pictures" were "much fewer in proportion to the total than they were ten years ago" and that "the belief, prevalent in many quarters, that Westerns are doomed." The definitive survey of the silent era argues that adults deserted the Western en masse after 1915, leading it to become a cheap "B" category of films that were so degraded by the 1920s that they "were the only genre segregated from the balance of studio's production." See Richard Koszarski, *An Evening's Entertainment: The Age of the Silent Picture Feature, 1915-28* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1990), 182-3, 288-90. A recent study of westerns in the silent period bears out this characterization, see Andrew Brodie Smith, "Shooting Cowboys and Indians: Silent Westerns, American Culture, and the Birth of Hollywood" (Ph. D. thesis, University of California Los Angeles, 2000).

[4] Two Civil War generals' endorsements in the show's 1885 program, quoted in Kasson, 59.

demanded of its heroes. Born in the crucible of mass production and popular culture, the publicity surrounding celebrities in Hollywood would enlarge and elaborate on such methods for selling the meanings attached to a particular form.

Motion pictures had already produced Buffalo's Bill's preeminent replacement by the year he died: actress Mary Pickford. That year of 1917 another poet, Vachel Lindsay, anointed Pickford "The Queen of the Movies" and her royal highness permanently relocated to Los Angeles, where she reigned over the star system that was inseparable from Hollywood itself.[5] "To repudiate this girl in haste is a high treason to the national heart," wrote Lindsay in a *New Republic* article that used Pickford's abilities to plead the case for the movies-as-art before his high-brow readership.[6] Already a celebrity by the time the fan magazine *Photoplay* began publishing in 1911, readers ranked her first in popularity that year, and for fifteen out of the next twenty.[7] "There has never been anything just like the public adulation showered on Mary," recalled one producer, who claimed she "could have risen to the top of United States Steel, if she had decided to be Carnegie instead of a movie star."[8] By 1916, Pickford was so "peculiarly pre-eminent

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[5] Vachel Lindsay, "Queen of My People," *The New Republic* (July 17, 1917): 280-1. For a more on the "Botticelli grace of Our Mary," see Vachel Lindsay, *The Art of the Moving Picture* (New York: Liveright, 1970, rpt. of the revised 1922 edition of the 1915 original), 3-4, 16, 54, 64, 127. On Lindsay's place in the development of film criticism, see Myron Lounsbury, "The Origins of American Film Criticism" (Ph.D. thesis, University of Pennsylvania, 1966), 50-8.

[6] Lindsay, "Queen of My People," 280.

[7] Jeanine Basinger, *Silent Stars* (Hanover: Wesleyan University Press, 2000), 57.

[8] Adolph Zukor with Dale Kramer, *The Public Is Never Wrong* (New York: G. P. Putnam's Sons, 1953), 110, 171. Obviously such an option was not available to women at the time. One important director noted that Pickford reached a "pinnacle" that had been occupied "in my lifetime by only two other stars—Maude Adams on stage and Geraldine Farrar in opera." Cecil B. DeMille, *The Autobiography of DeMille*, ed. Donald Hayne (Englewood Cliffs: Prentice Hall: 1959), 182.

that her position at the very top was subject to little question or jealousy," recalled a producer who wrote one of the industry's first histories.[9]

Pickford's preeminence in the period in which Hollywood became Hollywood suggests the different dynamics at work in the first cultural form shaped to meet the demands of mass production and consumption. Her place at the top of the industry signaled, most broadly, how the rise of corporate capitalism and consumer culture coincided with the end of men's stranglehold on the exercise of public influence and power. By 1917, the year in which "HOLLYWOOD" was first used in the mainstream press to signal a product, place, and an approach to life, the firestorm of media attention surrounding glamorous film personalities like Pickford displayed how some of the most successful motion picture entrepreneurs had learned an important lesson: the mass audience target they envisioned was a woman.[10] Images of women's faces and forms on film and in print advertisements proliferated in the selling of new products and pursuits to women.[11] These trends have often been taken as evidence of how the captains of

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[9] Benjamin Hampton, *History of the American Film Industry* (New York: Dover Publications, 1970 rpt from 1931), 166. The other early history written by a participant-observer also demonstrates her supremacy, naming four chapters after the actress and, in explaining why she was more commercially valuable than Charles Chaplin, noting that by 1916 she turned out a continuous stream of features to his less frequent two-reel comedies, see Terry Ramsaye, *A Million and One Nights* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1954, rpt.1926), 746.

[10] The first listing for Hollywood in the *Readers' Guide to Periodical Literature* was "In the Capital of Movieland," *Literary Digest* (November, 10, 1917): 82-9. Today it is common to assume that the promotion of female star is aimed at men when the reverse is often the case. For a discussion of how 90% of fan mail that studios received was from young women and that female stars often received twice as much men, see Leo Rosten, *Hollywood: The Movie Colony, The Movie Makers* (New York: Harcourt, Brace and Company, Inc., 1941), Appendix H, "Fan Mail," 409-413.

[11] Trade journals revealed that advertisers believed women to account for 85% of consumer spending by the early twenties, see Roland Marchand, *Advertising the American Dream* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1985), 65. See also Susan

consumer culture sought to cultivate an obsessive self-scrutiny among women that encouraged only narcissism and the compulsion to consume their way to happiness.[12] Yet women like Pickford also achieved unprecedented public influence and recognition in consumer culture industries in this period. And if we assume that women consumers exercised at least a modicum of rational self-interest in supporting her rise, Pickford's career might also suggest the interest some had in experimenting with a self-fashioning connected to their desire to make their way out into exciting, unfamiliar public territory, alone.[13]

Porter Benson, *Counter Cultures* (Urbana: University of Illinois, 1986); William Leach, "Transformation of American Department Stores," *Journal of American History* 71.2 (1984): 319-42.

[12] On the proliferation of women in ads, see Marchand, 165-188. My point is not to disregard such a view entirely, but merely to suggest it must be more carefully historicized and that scholars not expect women in the past to conform to current definitions of feminist behavior. For an example of this approach, see Sumiko Higahi, *Virgins, Vamps, and Flappers* (Montreal: Eden Press, 1978), "America's Sweetheart: Million Dollar Mary." Higashi argues for the "conservative effect that movies exerted with respect to the image of women" because they encouraged the sexual objectification of women, provided an escape from reality rather than dealing with the real problems women confronted, and did not offer the era's new women "alternative models of non-traditional life styles," iv-v.. Much of this pioneering work focused solely on reading films and interpreting them in the most negative possible light because the point of view defining their meaning was always assumed to be a male one. Consequently, although Higashi was the first modern historian to seriously consider both Pickford's screen persona and the public discussion of her role as a savvy business woman, her larger thesis forces her into positions that seem to me to contradict much of her evidence. For a more complicated view of Pickford's success that sees her "as merging the virgin to the harlot" who offered fans the image of a "modern working woman who was morally emancipated as well," see Lary May, *Screening Out the Past* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1980), chap. 5. Pickford's most recent biographer takes her industry defining role seriously, see Eileen Whitfield, *Pickford* (Lexington: University of Kentucky Press, 1997). See also Gaylyn Studlar, "Oh, 'Doll Divine': Mary Pickford, Masquerade, and the Pedophilic Gaze," in Jennifer Bean and Diane Negra, eds., *A Feminist Reader in Early Cinema* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2002), 349-73.

[13] For insights into women, modernity and consumption, see Anne Freidberg, *Window Shopping* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1993); Victoria de Grazia with Ellen Furlough, ed., *The Sex of Things* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1996); Peter

In short, by 1917, Queen Mary was at once agent and symbol, cause and consequence, of the new set of challenges and opportunities that confronted women in modern times. This chapter is concerned with the development of a new kind of "personality"—one that came to count so much to consumer culture and the women fans who supported Hollywood's rise.[14] A discussion of Mary Pickford—whose career and public image exemplifies the new type of personality—opens the chapter. The pages that follow seek to describe what her personality consisted of, how it took shape, and what it meant to those who supported it. To understand the significance of Pickford's personality it is also crucial to trace a series of larger, more gradual changes backwards in the history of the American theater and, more specifically, of women's relationship to the stage. The roots of Pickford's promotion lay in changes that got underway during the mid-nineteenth century when America's burgeoning consumer economy first drew women into the market place to work, shop, and play. The techniques of the star system

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Bailey, "The Victorian Barmaid as Cultural Prototype," in Bailey, *Popular Culture and Performance in the Victorian City* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998).

[14] Here I build on the influential essay published by Warren Susman, "'Personality' and Twentieth-Century Culture," *Culture as History* (New York: Pantheon Books, 1984), chap. 14. Susman explored the development of dominant modal types as symbols reflective of new needs produced by social change. Susman argued that as Americans moved from scarcity to abundance, radically different counsel and proscriptions arose to guide individuals toward successfully meeting the changed conditions under which society operated. The dominant model type shifted from one of "character" to one of "personality." The concept of personality addressed the dilemma of standing out in a mass society and the growing importance placed on consumption rather than production. He argued it was symbolized most vividly by the medium of motion pictures and its stars. My point here is the shift from a culture that celebrated men of good character to one in which women, and men, of glamorous personality were promoted, begs a more complicated analysis of what consumer culture meant to those for whom the label and attendant character traits of the "self made man" never applied. Susman ignored the gendered implications of this shift and used Pickford's husband Douglas Fairbanks as the best choice to illustrate what was radically new about the vision of self, and its relationship to societal power.

that produced Pickford's personality were first developed to promote actresses like Charlotte Cushman on the antebellum stage. In order for Cushman to achieve a public renown and influence that would have been previously unimaginable, new ideas about feminine nature, and women's capabilities, competencies, and interests, had to be justified.

Having entered the stage in 1899 at the age of eight, Pickford brought two decades of theatrical expertise to bear on the problem of how to negotiate the role of movie queen.[15] After her alcoholic father's death finalized his desertion of the family, Pickford's mother Charlotte erased the troubles of a failed marriage, declared herself a widow, a version of family history her daughter duplicated for the rest of her life, and struggled to support her three small children and invalid mother.[16] The daughter of devout Irish Catholics who emigrated to Toronto during a famine, increasingly all that separated Charlotte and her family from the slums in which they lived was her maintenance of respectability. According to Pickford, Charlotte's commitment to preserving her family's respectability nearly caused her to decline a boarder's offer to cast Mary and her younger sister in a play at the nearby Princess Theatre—the first public building to boast electric lights in the city.[17] But after "a daring trip backstage," Pickford claimed her mother overcame her reluctance at allowing "her innocent babies…to associate with actresses who smoke" and her fear of them making "a spectacle of

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[15] Pickford was born Gladys Smith in 1892. Whitfield, 8-9.
[16] Mary Pickford, *Sunshine and Shadow* (Garden City: Doubleday & Company, Inc., 1954), 23-9. Pickford offers the tragic version of her father's death and how the family's dire poverty created a "determination…that nothing could crush…I must try to take my father's place in some mysterious way, and prevent anything from breaking up my family." Whitfield details the real story of her father's alcoholism, desertion, and eventual death, 11-2.
[17] Whitfield, 21.

themselves on a pubic stage."[18] Or, perhaps, the eight dollar a week salary changed Charlotte's opinion about the profession of acting. Economic considerations were always of paramount interest to both mother and daughter.[19]

Whatever the case, Pickford debuted in a popular melodrama, *The Silver King*, performing two different roles.[20] Pickford preferred the "villainous little girl" she played in the first act, but it was as the hero's dying son in the final one that she impressed the manager and star of the production by improvising a bit of stage business that drew "the biggest laugh of the evening."[21] By the end of the year, Mary and her now "quite stage minded" mother were soliciting tips from a thirteen year-old variety-show performer, Elsie Janis, and her stage mother so that Pickford might imitate the older girl's "brilliant career." Pickford recalled that Janis earned the "unbelievable salary of seventy-five dollars a week" for her "magnificent imitation" of the Ziegfield showgirl, Anna Held, and renditions of songs like "'Oh, I just can't make my eyes behave!'" that "simply dazzled" the two. "'Take her to see the finest plays and artists,'" Mrs. Janis reportedly advised, but "first, and above all" she declared "let her be herself." Pickford claimed the advice

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[18] Pickford, *Sunshine and Shadow*, 30-1.

[19] One central way that Pickford explains her rise is as a series of salary raises, see 93, 101, 157. Zukor also describes her film career this way and, unlike Charles Chaplin and Cecil B. De Mille, seems to have respected her all the more for it, 110, 148. For a good, short summation of Pickford's professional life up through the founding of United Artists, see Tino Balio, "Stars in Business," in Balio ed., *The American Film Industry* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1986), 153-172.

[20] She was still Gladys Smith at this point. At 13, she took Mary Pickford at Belasco's urging, Pickford, *Sunshine and Shadow*, 15.

[21] All quotes, Ibid., 31-4. Elsie would introduce Pickford to Fairbanks at a party at her house, and called upon Pickford for comfort upon her mother's death, see Elsie Janis, *So Far, So Good!* (New York: E. P. Dutton & Co., Inc., 1932), 167, 340. As theatrical hopefuls, the Pickford and the Gish families—Lillian, Dorothy and their adored mother—roomed together in New York, also becoming life-long friends. Pickford would get Lillian and Dorothy their break at Biograph, see Charles Affron, *Lillian Gish* (New York: Scribner, 2001), 43-7.

served her well and the four became life-long friends; the two were the first in a series of mothers and daughters that Charlotte and Mary would first emulate and, after her fame surpassed all others, encourage along the road toward a career in acting.

Despite only modest success at first, Pickford quickly became the family's primary breadwinner and her search for better roles and bigger paychecks brought the family to New York City.[22] Initially she spent more time on tours outside the city than in it. Desperate for a break on Broadway by fifteen, she set her sights on catching the eye of the charismatic producer David Belasco.[23] To the increasing dismay of theatre critics, Belasco had built a near unrivalled following among higher class audiences of the so-called legitimate stage by producing sensational melodramas like *Du Barry* (1901), a tale of the rise and fall of the King of France's milliner-mistress, and *Girl of the Golden West* (1905), the story of a saloonkeeper-school teacher whose skill at poker and heartfelt pleas save her outlaw boyfriend from a hanging.[24] Such plays featured strong, active female protagonists performed by players whose acting technique evidenced the broader trend toward a more naturalistic performance style. Pickford's pursuit of Belasco worked. She landed her first Broadway role in *The Warrens of Virgina* (1907), a play that featured two other future flickers. Working alongside Pickford in the production were playwright William de Mille, who would later write and direct movies, and his young brother actor Cecil, who would direct some of the most successful films produced after the war.[25]

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[22] Whitfield, 36-53. Pickford was the eldest of three, including brother Jack.and sister Lottie.
[23] Pickford, *Sunshine and Shadow*, 55-6.
[24] Gerald Boardman, *The Oxford Companion to American Theatre* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1992), 66-7, 213, 295.
[25] Pickford, *Sunshine and Shadow*, 59-60

After the tour of *The Warrens* closed in 1909, Charlotte convinced her daughter to apply for work at the Biograph Studio by promising to let her wear silk stockings and high-heeled shoes for the first time.[26] Shuttling between the Broadway stage and Biograph productions filmed in New York and Los Angeles, Pickford became one of the first performers singled out by audiences as the shift to story pictures placed a new emphasis upon the characters that drove the movies' action.[27] During the mid-teens, the publicity surrounding the star system had only begun to perfect its ability to advertise performers as living symbols who dramatized audiences' fantasies and ambitions. The growing sophistication at telling silent stories with pictures drove the change in the attention devoted to performers. The movies' visual grammar became increasingly reliant upon "the close up." Cameras moved in to bring fans closer to performers' magnified faces. A group of young ingénues first captured audiences' imaginations and hearts; the devotion fans expressed toward them created the first movie stars. Since movie players appeared without billing or credit in the industry's earliest years, audiences grown intimate and intensely curious about their favorites resorted to calling them by the names of the companies at which they worked.

The American movie industry was built around this relationship, on the meanings that audiences attached to a particular symbol of the star. The development of the star system after 1912 gave form and focus to the stories produced by the ever widening circle of media that tracked the industry's transformation from a slightly disreputable entertainment geared toward those who could afford nothing better—and one that many

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[26] Ibid, 64

[27] On the importance of the shift to fictional film narratives in the production of audiences' interest in film performers as actors, see Richard deCordova, *Picture Personalities* (Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 1990), chap. 1.

assumed would be disappear—into the international symbol of glamour that Hollywood became. Stars introduced individuals around the world to what early Hollywood meant. For unlike many cultural forms that would follow it in the twentieth century, the movie industry relied upon audiences, not advertisers, to pay its bills. Indeed, popular understanding of, and interest about, Hollywood was inseparable from the publicity surrounding the development of the star system and the studios over which they were believed to preside. There were movies before there were movie stars. But Hollywood could not have existed without them.[28]

By 1910, *Motion Picture World*'s new section, "Picture Personalities," exploited the demands of fans to know more about the young women dubbed the "Vitagraph Girl," the "Biograph Girl," or, in Pickford's case, "Little Mary," a character name she frequently used at Biograph.[29] Most production stock companies also began to release the names of leads. But it took a Chicago film distributor, Carl Laemmle, to recognize the value in actively promoting, indeed, in cultivating and manipulating, audiences' interests in the women appearing on screens. In 1909, Laemmle left the industry's first trust, the Motion Picture Patents Company (Patents), to form the Independent Motion Picture Company (IMP); the company's name reflected his determination to break free

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[28] On the obvious, but often ignored, centrality of movie stars to the development of the American film industry, see deCordova, introduction. Most work on stars and the star system has been anecdotal or purely theoretical. DeCordova offers the most complete account of the development of the star system to date. See also Anthony Slide, *Early American Cinema* (Metuchen: Scarecrow Press, 1994); Gaylyn Studlar, *This Mad Masquerade* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1996).

[29] Florence Turner was the "Vitagraph Girl" and Florence Lawrence the first "Biograph Girl." On the general move toward naming players between 1909 and 1910, see deCordova, 50-64. On how this encouraged audiences to associate actors with a studio's brand-name, see Catherine Kerr, "Incorporating the Star: The Intersection of Business and Aesthetic Strategies in Early American Film," *Business History Review* 68.3 (1990): 383-410.

from the Patents's control.[30] Shut off from the screens and films controlled by the Patents and facing the lawsuits he knew would follow, Laemmle needed to distinguish IMP's product quickly. After adding producing to IMP, he lured Florence Lawrence, "The Biograph Girl," to work for him in order to capitalize on audiences' interest in the actress.[31] By sandwiching a large photograph of her familiar face between her real name and a headline proclaiming, "She's an Imp!" Laemmle promoted both the star and his company.

After branding Lawrence an IMP commodity, Laemmle orchestrated a remarkable publicity stunt designed to stoke fans' devotion. In March 1910, Laemmle took out ads in both major daily newspapers and the industry press that declared "WE NAIL A LIE" above a close-up of Lawrence. The "enemies of the Imp," the ad maintained, had "foisted on the public of St. Louis" a horrible story "that Miss Lawrence (the 'Imp' girl, formerly know as the 'Biograph' girl) had been killed by a street car."[32] The ads' accusations succeeded in creating a stir while simultaneously casting both Lawrence and IMP as romantic, scrappy survivors, fighting against nefarious rivals who would stop at nothing to destroy the two. The stunt so enhanced Lawrence's visibility that she left IMP the following year to form a production company of her own.[33]

Laemmle replaced her with another leading young Biograph actress, "Little Mary" Pickford. Biograph's unwillingness to publicize Pickford's name and raise the

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[30] On the struggle between the Patents and the Independents, see deCordova, 56-62; Robert Sklar, *Movie-Made America* (Vintage: New York, 1976), 33-47.
[31] Much has been written on Laemmle's promotion. Here I rely on deCordova, 55-64.
[32] Ibid, 59. DeCordova notes that no evidence of a story proclaiming Lawrence's death has ever been found and that episode suggests the work of Imp publicists.
[33] Slide, 146.

salary of the popular player precipitated her move to IMP.[34] Laemmle was willing to pay Pickford more for the opportunity to fan the existing curiosity of audiences. After officially releasing Pickord's name in *Moving Picture World* in 1911, Laemmle distributed a series of films featured simply as "Little Mary Imps."[35] Like Lawrence, Pickford left IMP after only a year, suggesting that these ingénues who could wheel-and-deal with the boys. Dissatisfaction with the quality of IMP's films prompted Pickford's return to work with director D.W. Griffith at Biograph, whose technical ability she admired and studied. Yet Pickford was too certain of her individual worth to long accept the anonymity that Biograph still imposed on players, too confident of her own instincts about "Little Mary" to conform to Griffith's domineering personality and preference for what she called "wishy-washy heroines."[36]

Not until her collaboration with another recent addition to the ranks of independent producers, Adolph Zukor, did Pickford find a partner whose style and ambitions perfectly complemented her own. The handsome, soft spoken and impeccably mannered Hungarian had come to the United States as a poor youth, made a tidy sum as a cloak manufacturer in New York, and invested his profits in nickelodeons. Zukor quickly recognized the nickelodeon business's potential for growth. A man of enormous ambition, he possessed an uncanny ability to study a situation unobtrusively from the

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[34] Pickford, *Sunshine and Shadow*, 83; Balio, 156-7; Zukor, 96.
[35] Balio, 156-7.
[36] Pickford, *Sunshine and Shadow*, 73. Pickford recalled that "I would not run around like a goose with its head off, crying 'oooooh…the little birds! Ooooh…look! A little bunny!' That's what he taught all his ingenues, and they all did the same thing," quoted in Kevin Brownlow, *Mary Pickford Rediscovered* (New York: Abrams, 1999), 67. On how Biograph most rigorously imposed anonymity on players while simultaneously using their real names as character names most frequently, see Kerr, "Incorporating the Star," 397-9.

sidelines until he understood how to make it work better than those he watched.[37] Not much taller than Pickford herself, both immigrants wore their competitive drives lightly and were as focused on the long term potential of motion pictures as on immediate gains. After moving from exhibition to production in 1912, the name of the company Zukor founded—Famous Players—made plain his intention to draw the middle class into the movie audience by raising the status of the performers in motion pictures. Zukor determined that the best way to "kill" what he called "the slum tradition in movies" was to produce movies that appropriated the prestige of well known stage players in longer, "feature" length movies that allowed for adaptations of equally distinguished plays.[38] This aim he summed up in an expression that encapsulated his design to promote only "Famous Players in Famous Plays."[39]

With typical accuracy Zukor succeeded in this goal immediately, helping to finance and distribute in the United States the work of Sarah Bernhardt, perhaps the most celebrated stage tragedienne of all time, in film adaptations of *Queen Elizabeth* and

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[37] See William de Mille, *Hollywood Saga* (New York: E.P. Dutton & Co, 1939), 179; Hampton, 153-4.

[38] Will Irwin, *The House that Shadows Built* (Garden City, NY: Doubleday, Doran, & Company, Inc., 1928), 151. The move to features to attract a middle class audience was at least partly inspired the success of 3 1911 Italian films—*Dante's Inferno, Crusaders,* and *Odyssey*—and the fact that German and Italian movies were already aimed at the middle class. On Zukor's exhibition of the European features through the "road show method" in legitimate theatrical house where patrons were charged $.75 to $2.00, see Balio, "Struggles for Control," in Balio, ed., 109-113; Karen Ward Mahar, "Women, Filmmaking, and the Engendering of the American Film Industry, 1896-1928" (Ph. D. thesis, University of Southern California, 1995), 130. By mid 1915, more expensive features became a standard part of most motion picture programs, Eileen Bowser, *The Transformation of Cinema* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2990), 192, 212-15.

[39] On the slogan, see Zukor, 59.

Camille.[40] Zukor parlayed the association with Bernhardt into an alliance with the respected Broadway producer Daniel Frohman, gaining access to other popular plays and introductions to luminaries of the American stage.[41] While the presence of established stage actors caused some to take a second look at the flickers' potential to become more respectable, Zukor quickly discovered that critical success and an actor's fame on stage did not guarantee a following on film.[42] Audiences seemed to have a mind of their own in selecting their favorites, and the clearest expressions of their tastes at the time still ran toward the ingenue "girls" at Biograph and Vitagraph and the action-adventure dare-devils in episodic serials like *What Happened to Mary?* that first hit screens in 1912.[43]

Back on Broadway and starring as Juliet in *A Good Little Devil* in 1913, Pickford offered a singular and appealing combination: a proven film attraction who also carried the imprimatur of the stage.[44] Zukor purchased the rights to film *A Good Little Devil* with an eye toward seizing the opportunity to approach Pickford about joining Famous Players.[45] "The screen public will choose its favorites. There will be a star system rivaling—maybe outshining—that of the stage," Zukor claims to have prophesized to

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[40] On Bernhardt's unsurpassed reputation, see Susan Glenn, *The Theatrical Roots of Modern Feminism* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2000), chap. 1.
[41] Daniel Frohman, *Daniel Frohman Presents* (New York: Claude Kendall & Willoughby Sharp, 1935). The author notes he went against his brother Charles's wishes and sold Zukor the rights for $25,000. Other stage "greats" that Zukor put on screen included, Lily Langtry, James Hackett, James O'Neill, and Minnie Maddern Fiske.
[42] Zukor, 71. See also Frohman 248, 275; Lounsbury, 2-3; deCordova, 39.
[43] DeCordova, 72. Though he observes that exclusively female players were first singled out he does not explore the point. On how most prominent independents focused on exploiting the fame of women after 1911, see Mahar, 121-6.
[44] On her continued and escalating struggles with DWG at Biograph, see Pickford, *Sunshine and Shadow*, 88-91.
[45] Zukor said meeting Pickford was largely the reason he sought to film the play, Zukor, 93-5. Pickford claimed a pre-existing fascination with Zukor, Pickford, *Sunshine and Shadow*, 97.

Pickford and Charlotte over lunch.[46] For her part, Pickford was already "fascinated" by what she had read about his "daring venture" to produce only features "based on the finest plays, and with the outstanding actresses and actors of the world."[47] Zukor's offer dangled before the barely twenty-one year old actress the prospect of marrying the artistic legitimacy—or, in her words, "the superior attractions"—of her "old home the theater" to "the exciting jigsaw puzzle of a motion picture in progress."

Such talk also hit home because Pickford had realized two things during her most recent stint on Broadway: she missed moving pictures and her fans at the stage door were more interested in meeting "Little Mary" of the screen than Juliet of the boards. Always the consummate business woman, Pickford realized that her popularity as a film player outdistanced her reputation on the stage, a fact that might translate into greater earnings before the camera. And so, "after a much heated negotiation" in which Pickford secured a salary of $500 dollars a week, they created a partnership founded on the shared belief that the industry's future lay in developing the relationship between movie players and audiences.[48]

A newcomer to movie production, Zukor seized the opportunity to study Pickford's superior understanding of what worked in front of the camera during story

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[46] Zukor, 98.
[47] Pickford, *Sunshine and Shadow*, 97.
[48] Ibid., 98. See also Frohman, 249. Frohman credits Pickford's salary, not Bernhard's performance, with sparking his brother Charles's interest in the movies. According to Daniel, after Charles confirmed the company paid Pickford $500 a week he began to think "more seriously of the character and scope of this new company," having believed "the sums he paid Maude Adams…the highest standards that could be reached in the amusement world."

meetings with the actress and Daniel Frohman.[49] Recognizing the camera demanded a lighter touch, Pickford pioneered more emotionally restrained acting techniques and chose scenarios that leavened drama with humor.[50] "'Make them laugh and make them cry and make them laugh again," was how she later characterized the strategy.[51] The years observing Griffith also held her in good stead. By the time Pickford joined Zukor, she possessed as deep an understanding of the grammar of film as anyone in the business. Little wonder that he characterized himself as "only an apprentice" to the "expert workman" Pickford in these early years.[52] And if Zukor found a bankable face with more knowledge about the product they created, then Pickford discovered a partner whose attention to her long term potential rivaled her own. Zukor's personal reserve intimidated friend and foe alike. Despite the pretense of informality among those who worked pictures, his soon-to-be partner Jesse Lasky—a man as gregarious and genial as Zukor was quiet and intense—remarked that forty years passed before they substituted "Mister" for each other's first names.[53] "No one," Cecil B. De Mille remembered, "ever calls this

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[49] Irwin, 245. See also Frohman, 276, 280. Frohman notes Pickford's suggestions "were adopted before the picture was put into production…she was an expert critic," and described how the group as a "small family" to discuss plans and prepare.

[50] On how the more naturalistic acting techniques common on stage made their way to the screen, see Bowser, *Transformation*, 87-97. For the argument that a more restrained style was associated with middle class tastes, see Roberta Paerson, "Cultivated Folks and the Better Classes," *Journal of Popular Film and TV* 15.3 (Fall 1987):122.

[51] Pickford, quoted in Brownlow, 400.

[52] Irwin, 245

[53] Lasky, 124. "Despite the studio custom of calling everyone by first name, a custom particularly observed in the case of enemies or those whose scalps were soon to adorn some chief's war bonnet, Mr. Zukor always remained *Mister* Zukor," William deMille, 180.

man anything but 'Mr. Zukor.'"[54] Yet Mary called him simply "Papa Zukor," a man she likened to "a loving and devoted father."[55]

Only a year later, Pickford turned in a performance in *Tess of the Storm County* so phenomenally popular that one exhibitor finally put the obvious up in lights, billing the actress simply as "America's Sweetheart."[56] Beginning with opening credits which read, "Daniel Frohman Presents America's Foremost Film Actress, Mary Pickford, in the famous tale of woman's heroism, 'Tess of the Storm Country' by Grace Miller White," the movie announced its fidelity to the best selling novel by White, promising to satisfy audiences' expectations for a rousing melodrama in which Mary's courage saved the day.[57] Early reviews pronounced *Tess* "a story by a woman, of a woman, and for women," although conceding the movie was "for men too."[58] Tess lived up to its promotional promises. And, if the role can be taken an indication of what audiences saw in Pickford, today's understanding of the word "sweet" does not capture the qualities the actress projected in the role. Though kind and willing to care for others in need, Tess embodied a proud, independent woman on the brink of adulthood who fearlessly gets herself in and out of trouble and never loses her sense of humor for long. Tess established a key theme that Pickford's characters would explore again and again: the idea that a young woman's wits, physical bravery, and moral sense were ultimately her surest, and,

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[54] Cecil DeMille, 153. DeMille also observed how this contradicted the industry's "easy going ways that put most people in it on a first name basis five minutes after they have met."
[55] Pickford, *Sunshine and Shadow*, 98. On their close relationship, see also, Irwin, 244-8; Cecil DeMille, 180-1.
[56] Balio, "Stars in Business," 157.
[57] All quotes from *Tess of the Storm Country* (Famous Players 1914). Print viewed at the Library of Congress.
[58] *Moving Picture World*, n.d., .in Mary Pickford Core Clipping File, Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences, Los Angeles (hereafter AMPAS).

indeed, only guide in the struggle to come of age. In the process, Pickford's character offered young women in the audience the chance to identify with a role model who bested the troubles she confronted on her own.

Motherless and accosted or abandoned by one man after another, Tess Skinner confronts the world alone, wearing nothing but rags and a mane of curls. The only child of a squatter who poaches fish for a living from a nearby landowner, Elias Graves, Tess resources amount to little more than a temper and good sense. After a fellow squatter frames her father for the murder of the man engaged to Graves's daughter, Teola, Tess convinces Graves's son, Fredrick, of her father's innocence. While dad languishes in jail, the handsome Fredrick aids—unsuccessfully, of course—in his legal defense, teaches Tess to read the bible, and a romance blossoms between the two. When her privileged sweetheart departs for college, Tess alone must fight off the true killer's attempts to force her into marriage, rescue Teola from drowning herself, and help the unwed mother deliver a son. Tess agrees to raise the infant at the distraught mother's insistence, and when Fredrick returns home for a visit he assumes Tess to be the child's mother. Disappointed by his lack of trust, Tess spurns Fredrick, declaring, "If I want to keep a brat in this here shanty it's nobody's dum business!"

The scene that best captured Pickford's ability to portray young women who challenged traditional feminine conventions occurs when the baby sickens. Convinced the child is dying, the newly converted Tess believes an immediate baptism necessary to save his soul. Pickford subtly communicates both her fear at appearing before the wealthy parishioners, including all the Graves, as an assumedly disgraced, unwed mother and her utter determination to carry out what she knows is right. Faced with the

minister's speechless refusal to baptize the baby, Tess assumes the right to confer grace, sprinkling water upon the baby's forehead before the congregants' horrified faces. This ultimate act of bravery prompts Teola to declare herself the child's true mother, revealing Tess as the true embodiment of the Christian spirit before father, son, and all. Throughout the movie, Pickford's performance blends physical comedy and emotional pathos to redefine ladylike behavior; her rapscallion heroine was a refashioning of the virtuous, wilting, "wishy-washy" good girl characters typically associated with melodramas. Her Tess, as we will see more later, reflected a wider shift in melodrama, one popularized both by reporters writing for the sensational-style daily newspapers and the movies in which Pickford rose to stardom.

Zukor later admitted that Pickford's work in *Tess* lifted Famous Players "onto the high road," a road that turned their collaboration into a legal partnership that helped to pave the way toward the emerging industrial structure of motion pictures.[59] After the spectacular success of *Tess,* Pickford negotiated terms in January 1915 that raised her salary to $2000 a week and an equal share of the profits in the productions in which she starred. Unbeknownst to Pickford, the increase was passed on to exhibitors who paid more for her films than others released by Famous Players's distributor, Paramount.[60] When Mary and her mother caught on to what was happening they decided it was time to renegotiate with Zukor again. After her contract expired in 1916, the pair asked for $1000 a day and a host of other concessions that would afford Pickford greater artistic

[59] Zukor, 102. Although he downplays how powerfully controlling the star system figured into Zukor's calculations, the best concise summary of Zukor's career at this point is still, Sklar, chap. 9.
[60] Balio, "Stars in Business," 158.

control over her work.[61] Zukor's decision to meet Pickford's demands reflected his continued belief that stars—as the most reliable predictor of box office returns—were the most crucial element of production.[62]

Paramount's head, W.W. Hodkinson, balked at the idea of paying Pickford more, believing that exhibitors and audiences would not accept the higher prices that such a salary would entail.[63] Rather than lose Pickford, Zukor determined that he needed to control distribution in order to protect production.[64] During one short month in 1916, Zukor negotiated a new contract with Pickford and a merger with a rival company owned by Jesse Lasky.[65] Combined, the Famous Players-Lasky Corporation (FPL) accounted for nearly three quarters of Paramount's product. After the merger, the new powerhouse producing team of Zukor and Lasky successfully conspired to purchase enough shares of

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[61] Hampton, 156-9. The author was (unsuccessfully) attempting to sign Pickford for the American Tobacco Company in order to control a merger between First National, VLSE and Famous Players. On how the contract eventually signed would pay Pickford more, see Balio, "Stars in Business," 159-60.

[62] For an account that portrays Zukor as the chief stalwart supporting the star system against a rising "anti-star faction," including Griffith, Sennett and Ince's Triangle Productions, see Alfred A. Cohn, "'Stars or No Stars'—That *is* the Question, *Photoplay* (January 1918): 95-6. On the point more generally, see Balio, "Struggles for Control," 110-115; David Bordwell, Janet Staiger, and Kristin Thompson, *The Classical Hollywood Cinema* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1985), 98-9; John Izod, *Hollywood and the Box Office, 1895-1986*, (New York: Columbia University Press, 1988), 47.

[63] Hampton, 162, 174.

[64] Pickford was Zukor's "lone ace"; "the price of Mary Pickford became the price of supremacy," Ramsaye, 744-750. The other early history calls the chapter on this stage of the film industry's development "The Pickford Revolution," and notes she was the "only member of either sex who ever became the focal point of the entire industry," see Hampton, 190.

[65] Lasky Feature Play Company was another independent committed to producing only feature length films that used Paramount as its distributor.

Paramount to take control of the distribution company from Hodkinson.[66] Within months, Zukor constructed motion picture's first mansion: a mammoth corporate structure cemented in no small part by the profits produced by Pickford.[67] Her 1916 contract reflected her importance to FPL's fiscal health. It guaranteed the actress the greater of either a million dollar salary or half the profits of her films, the right to select directors and supporting cast, and created Artcraft to distribute her films as a "star series" separate from the rest of the company's product.[68] Since other companies had offered Pickford more money, her decision reflected more than simply dollar-sense. "'I like to work with [Zukor]," she confided to a friend, "'We have the same ideas. We've been down in the world and up in the world together, and I am sure of him.'"[69]

The deal made Pickford the first actor to produce her own films and Zukor the first producer to distribute enough product through FPL to demand that exhibitors "block book" only his pictures. The practice required exhibitors to purchase less desirable movies in order secure those that featured Pickford, the "nucleus around which he built his whole program."[70] Zukor can sell his whole block of pictures by hanging them around Mary's neck,'" was how William deMille, a writer and director at the newly

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[66] On how FPL quickly absorbed Pallas and Morosco, see Jesse Lasky to Cecil DeMille, July 26, 1916, Paolo Cherchi and Lornzo Codelli, eds., *The DeMille Legacy* (Pordenone: Le Giornate del Cinema Muto, 1991), 405-6.

[67] Correspondence between Lasky and DeMille reveals a slightly different chronology than the one customarily described. Lasky Features had become "the partner of Famous on a 50-50 basis in the Mary Pickford Contract" but would not merge with the company, Jesse Lasky to Cecil DeMille, June 9, 1916. Later Lasky noted the merger had happened and that "through the new directors and new president we are in control" of Paramount, Jesse Lasky to Cecil DeMille, June 27, 1917, Cherchi and Codelli, eds., 366, 383-5.

[68] See Balio, "Stars in Business," 159-60.

[69] Irwin, 248. Pickford characterizes her years with Zukor as her happiest professionally, 98.

[70] William deMille,146.

formed Famous Players-Lasky/Paramount studio, characterized the arrangement that would later generate opposition from the federal government and many segments of the industry—including Pickford herself.[71] Zukor never slighted Pickford's central role in the establishment of his studio-empire despite the troubles that would develop between them. "Mary Pickford was the first of the great stars," he declared decades later, "We built the modern movie industry on the star system, but the public made the stars."[72]

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The changes symbolized by the rise of Pickford's personality were part and parcel of how the déclassé, disreputable, and run-amok American nickelodeon business became Hollywood in the postwar period, an industry that came to emblematize to many abroad not just the new strength and style of America's commercial empire, but why the country seemed to embody modernity itself.[73] But Pickford's tour-de-force performance of the actress-as-prima-donna was also a convention more than a century in the making; it vividly displayed how much popular culture helped to change women's relationship to the public sphere. Over the course of the nineteenth century, the theater acted as a sort of bellwether for women's public roles, indicating the outer limits of where women could socialize, what they might show and tell there, how much money they could earn, and to

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[71] Ibid. The Federal Trade Commission would charge in its 1921 suit against FPL that Zukor had managed to control the industry through controlling the most popular stars. See the account offered by Zukor's counsel, William Marston Seabury, *The Public and the Motion Picture Industry* (New York: The MacMillan Company, 1926), 18-19.
[72] Zukor, 4.
[73] See for instance "Our Motion Pictures Circling the Earth," *The Literary Digest* (September 28, 1918): 78; "American Films Corrupting Britain," *The Literary Digest* (December 4, 1920): 34; "America Is Dream of European Artist, Says Lubitsch," *Exhibitors Herald* (January 14, 1922): 42.

what degree they might openly command authority. At the beginning of the nineteenth century theater-going, like public life in general, was an almost entirely male dominated activity. Men played the best roles and occupied most of the seats. Plays typically consigned women to marginal roles symbolizing either pure innocence or degraded vice. As so-called members of a "third sex," the actresses who performed on them had long been reckoned beyond the pale of respectability.[74] By 1900, the legitimate stage had become a "feminized" activity, where mostly women spectators could watch celebrated female personalities act out stories in which female protagonists drove the action of the plot.[75] In order for this to happen the star system, a business practice of consumer capitalism, had to develop. The star system displayed consumer culture's interest in attracting women into public for different kinds of work and play. The star system was also a means to advertise plays by stoking audiences' interest in the commodities of particular stars whose personalities were differentiated through press stories, publicity photographs, and performances. Yet before women could be promoted as personalities worthy of public recognition and renown, a more complicated, relativistic understanding of female nature, and its relationship to the public sphere, had to take hold. By 1915,

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[74] Mack Sennett with Cameron Shipp, *The King of Comedy* (San Francisco: Mercury House, 1990, rpt. 1954), 193. The association of male actors with an unconventional sexual behavior and identity dates back at least to the Romans. For women in the Anglo-American world the fact that men played women on stages until the period of the Restoration seems to have helped to transfer some of these association to female players, see Simon Trussler, *Cambridge Illustrated History of British Theatre* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994), 8-9, 122-4. The beautifully androgynous, eponymous heroine in Theophile Gautier's *Mademoiselle de Maupin* (1835) was among the first to refer to herself as a member of the "third sex," introducing the stereotype of the lesbian femme fatale.

[75] Though I do not agree with how characterizes all the effects of this process, see Richard Butsch, "Bowery B'hoys and Matinee Ladies; The Regendering of the Nineteenth Century American Theater," *American Quarterly* 46.3 (1994): 374-450.

"The Pickford Revolution," as one contemporary producer called the transition to an industrial structure built around the centrality of feature films and stars, would become one of the most dramatic manifestations of changes that had begun earlier on the American stage.[76] In other words, a broader shift in the aesthetic, audience, and general attitude toward the legitimate stage's public women had to take place before Queen Mary could become the "focal point of an entire industry."[77]

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Theater-going as late as the 1820s was a part social, part political event, involving mostly men. As audience members, men occupied established places within the typical theater's tripartite seating arrangement: the ground-floor pit for the "middling" sorts, the boxes above for the elite, and the third tier balcony for those with the fewest financial resources.[78] The roles for women were circumscribed as well. Local gentry owned and controlled the country's few theatrical stock companies that performed the same repertoire time and again. Versions of Shakespeare that made the tragedies less tragic and more melodramatic and "fairy tale" melodramas predominated.[79] Turning on a threat posed to a helpless heroine's virtue and her eventual restoration "to the bosom of her

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[76] Hampton, "The Pickford Revolution," chap. 8.
[77] Ibid., 190.
[78] Bruce McConachie, *Melodramatic Formations* (Iowa City: University of Iowa Press, 1992), chap. 1. Faye Dudden, *Women in the American Theater, 1790-1870* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1994).
[79] Lawrence Levine, *Highbrow/Lowbrow* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1988), 35-44. The author describes how alterations of Shakespeare's plays emphasized their melodramatic qualities, though this is not his point. Robertson Davies, *The Mirror of Nature* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1983), 25. Davies makes the point explicitly: "the difference between the noble, classically spoken Hamlet of John Philip Kemble (1783) and the tempestuous Shylock of Edmund Kean in 1814 is the difference between Neo-classicism and Romanticism."

home, her father, and her God," the roles for women resembled those that Griffith later favored to Pickford's dismay.[80] Some of the "theater's most ardent habitués," and certainly the largest category of women in attendance, were prostitutes, commonly called "public women," who mingled in the third tier.[81] The presence of prostitutes and alcohol, combined with the celebration of sensuous display and illusion, earned the theater the reputation of the enemy of the family and a flat prohibition by its principle opponent: the Protestant church.[82] The special regulation of theatrical exhibitions was "an anomaly of English law" indicating the middle class tendency to consider "the stage a low form of entertainment and to bracket actors in the same category with vagabonds and beggars."[83] Accordingly, all players, male and female, were considered a morally suspect, vagabond caste with no social standing.[84] Forsaking womanly modesty and a home to earn a living declaiming and displaying themselves before strange men, actresses had long been associated with sexual immorality and accorded especial censure. The religious and

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[80] McConachie, 38. The exigencies of the Revolutionary period seem to have precipitated a short window that allowed pioneering playwrights like Mercy Otis Warren and Judith Sargent Murray to write more active public roles for actresses. See Dudden, 20; Linda Kerber, *Women of the Republic* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1980), 271-3. However, these were atypical gains strangled by the larger context of theatergoing.

[81] John Murtagh and Sara Harris, *Cast the First Stone* (New York: McGraw Hill, 1957), 205. See also, Dudden, 21-3.

[82] On the opposition of the Protestant church and attitudes toward actresses during the nineteenth century, see Claudia Johnson, *American Actresses* (Chicago: Nelson-Hall, 1984), chap. 1. Johnson notes that, except for Episcopalians, every Protestant sect nationwide banned theater-going because, as Henry Ward Beecher put it, the stage was "the gate of debauchery, the porch of pollution…the door to all the sinks of iniquity." For the conflation of gambling, brothels, and the theater among evangelical Protestants in this period, see Paul Boyer, *Urban Masses and Moral Order* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1978), 52-3, Jackson Lears, *Something for Nothing* (New York: Viking, 2002), 154-5.

[83] "Censorship of the Motion Picture," *Yale Law Journal* 49 (1939): 89. The association dated from Cromwellian times.

[84] See Johnson, chap. 3.

respectable saw little difference between the women on the stage and those parading along the third tier.[85]

Thus, though some have idealized this early theater as a great meeting ground where all Americans gathered to share a common culture on equal terms, this was simply not the case.[86] Most theaters excluded or segregated free blacks.[87] And while gentlemen could choose to ignore the church and partake of the playhouse's pleasures with little consequence, women who wished to remain ladies, decidedly, could not. Hence the ladies, to use the parlance of the day, were unusual sights at these performances, their occasional appearance "in the play or at the playhouse" taking "place under a moral cloud" that threatened to collapse their status with those of the third tier's public women.[88] If this theater were a microcosm of society, as many then and since have liked to claim, performance and space seamlessly communicated the same message about the problem of women's place in public: without obvious paternal protection women were

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[85] Such an association dated back to when women were first introduced on the English Restoration stage, see Dudden, 21.

[86] This is Levine's argument. It strikes me as shortsighted, given it naturalizes the exclusion of nearly half the population, women, and the segregation or exclusion of black Americans. Levine demonstrates that the cultural forms he investigates—Shakespearean theater, opera, and symphonic performances—were not considered the sole possession of elite or educated classes in this period, but his argument ignores, even as his evidence demonstrates, how taste differences, especially regarding audiences' behavior, were apparent in the e19C. The process he described might be read instead as one that displays how some commercial entrepreneurs emphasized different audience preferences through market segmentation. It is possible to accept Levine's argument that a process wherein the pursuit of status by the middle class resulted in the "sacralization" of culture—producing a new and more rigid classification that separated Highbrow/Lowbrow pursuits by 1900—without accepting his idea that through the 1840s a sort of cultural golden age existed, in which everyone shared the same culture, on the same terms.

[87] Dudden, 112.

[88] Ibid., 21. See also, Mary Ryan, *Women in Public; Between Banners and Ballots* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1990), 67; Johnson, 13.

outside the moral order and placed under a sexual surveillance that could lead to commercial exchange and ruin.

The status of performers dramatically transformed between 1830 and 1865.[89] Filling the seats of the antebellum period's more numerous and much larger stock companies demanded different business practices. Increasingly, a new breed of theatrical entrepreneurs focused on encouraging young, working class men with a few hours to kill after work to transfer their customary all-male socializing (excluding prostitutes) at the saloon to theaters.[90] Cheaper tickets attracted these urban rowdies, but entrepreneurs quickly discovered that the magnet of a particular star in new "heroic" or "apocalyptic melodramas" was what drew them back.[91] A mobile network of stars arose, destroying the traditional balance of power between managers and players.[92] An important theater manager in Philadelphia bemoaned how "a spirit of locomotiveness hitherto unexampled" during "a commercial season of great excess" had destroyed "the great English theatres,"

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[89] On theaters, see Dudden, 58-60; McConachie, 26-31. On the larger economic context of the development of capitalism in this period, see Charles Sellers, *The Market Revolution* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1991).

[90] McConachie, 22-8; Richard Butsch, *The Making of American Audiences* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000), chap. 3. The author describes this theater as a virtually all male space, noting "the geography of their distinctly masculine culture was composed of the boarding house, saloon, theater, and fire company."

[91] Theatrical press agents and critics helped to incite audiences' near fanatical devotion to specifically American players featured in "apocalyptic" and "heroic" melodramas. Detailed descriptions of these plays are found in McConachie, chaps., 2, 4, and 5. On the importance of these melodramas as having specifically "American" origins and American actors, rather than English or French, see Robert C. Allen, *Horrible Prettiness* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1991), 81-2. David Grimsted, *Melodrama Unveiled* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1968), 33-6. The author notes the effect of the absence of international copyright law on the practice.

[92] McConachie, 25, 74-7.

making "the system of stars the order of 1835."[93] Edwin Forrest was the star whose fame surpassed all other "Native Talent."[94] Like Buffalo Bill after him, Forrest was promoted not as a modern celebrity would be in Hollywood, but as an authentic hero whose performances displayed his stable and sincere character. Audiences who cheered Forrest revered him as an embodiment of the roles he played. Nothing separated the public performer from the private man.[95] To his legion of fans, Forrest was the common man's champion, a fearless destroyer of tyrants. "It is no painted shadow you see in Mr. Forrest, no piece of costume," one reviewer touted "but a man, there to do his four hours of work brawinly [sic], it may be, and sturdily, and with great outlay of muscular power but there's a big heart thrown in."[96] Forrest was no effete, European fop costumed in finery like a lady or made-up with grease paint like a whore. Forrest was heroic on stage for exhibiting precisely the same qualities he was believed, however erroneously, to possess in private. Forrest's friend and official biographer pinpointed the "one essential ideal" that made his "personality" standout in this homo-social arena: his "fearless faithful manhood."[97]

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[93] William B. Wood, *Personal Recollections of the Stage, Embracing Notions of Actors, Authors, Auditors, during a Period of Forty Years* (Philadelphia: H. C. Baird, 1855), 391, quoted in McConachie, 26.

[94] On the career of the first great American born theatrical star, Edwin Forrest, see McConachie, esp. 77-109; Ginger Strand, "My Noble Spartacus," in *Passing Performances*, Robert A. Schanke and Kim Marra, eds., (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan, 1998), 19-40.

[95] On the importance of authenticity to the representation of public of figures in this period, see Susman, 274.

[96] *Democratic Review* (1845), quoted in McConachie, 85. Forrest was active in Democratic politics over several decades.

[97] Rev. William Alger, quoted in Ibid., 88. See also Strand, 30-1. The author notes the important role that Forrest's public homo-social bonds and appeal played in both representations of his manhood, and 19C masculinity in general.

Women continued to occupy a marginal space both on stage and in the audience of this working man's theater. Economics, custom, and the not infrequent eruption of riotous behavior curtailed working class women's presence at the theater.[98] The roles for actresses in the new plays changed little, confining them to mostly minor parts that mirrored notions about "true womanhood" pervading popular conventions and culture.[99] Originating among white middle class urbanites, the ideal held that Woman should embody everything that Man—ever more consumed by the hurrying, competitive outside world of commerce—did not. Leading a pious, passive, and asexual existence, the ideal true woman was to exercise spiritual power over children and husband from inside the home's four walls. A rumor that a lady was not exactly as she appeared was enough to foul her reputation, a spotless standard that all but the most financially secure white women found nearly impossible to maintain. This differentiation of roles rigidly separated men's natures from ladies', "endangered" women of private virtue from "dangerous" women of public, sexual vice, and white womanhood from all others.

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[98] On how customary traditions and economics left theater-going a mostly male activity, see Dudden, 108-11. See also Christine Stansell, *City of Women* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1987), chap 5. Stansell argues that women were a demographic majority in NYC by 1830, and that working women became a significant presence on the streets and in places of commercial amusement. Stansell draws this conclusion by ignoring how the vast majority of working women were domestics living with employers and crucially qualifies her own characterization, writing "Bowery men saw public life—in their case, working class life—as a place where men were the main show and women the supporting cast."

[99] Barbara Welter, "The Cult of True Womanhood, 1820-1860," *American Quarterly* 18. 3 (1966): 151-174. Welter identified the core components of the ideal—piety, purity, submissiveness, and domesticity—constructed by the antebeullum period's economic, political, and cultural transformations. Female roles in melodramas of this period parallels Welter's ideal, Grimsted, 172. On how this became less true after mid-century, see my ftnt.154.

Perhaps it also helped to lend some order to a period marked by regular panics that might reverse the fortunes of even the most industrious.[100]

Yet before too long theater managers were increasingly inviting middle class women into theaters. During a particularly severe panic between 1837 and 1842, theatrical entrepreneurs sought to tap the rising purchasing power of the middle class by courting women's patronage.[101] Managers brought the ladies out in droves by barring prostitutes, turning the third tier into a "family circle," eliminating the sale of alcohol, discouraging the audience from outbursts that had led to fights and riots, instituting matinees, and generally cleaning up the language and physical environment of theaters. At mid-century, such changes resulted in nothing less than the sexual integration of "the first public den of male sociability."[102]

The moment also witnessed the rise of the first great American-born actress: Charlotte Cushman. Cushman's road to fame and fortune revealed much about actresses' different relationship to celebrity and how a growing consumer economy helped to change women's public roles. The season in which her star was launched witnessed the creation of the first public space designed especially for the ladies: a marble palace department store near the heart of New York City's financial district.[103] Both events indicated how economics might support the ladies' staking out heretofore dangerous public territory for their pleasures, even as it created new kinds jobs for women who could not afford the fun. Like Forrest, Cushman played the same roles time and again on

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[100] Ryan, chap. 2; Mary Douglas, *Purity and Danger* (London: Routledge, 2002, rpt. 1966).
[101] Johnson, 39; Dudden, 78-82.
[102] Ryan, 79.
[103] Ibid, 76. The season was 1856-7 and the store was A.T. Stewart.

stages. But the protagonists she played communicated something much different. Cushman turned minor parts into tour-de-forces performances by playing deviant women who wielded power from society's margins. Her most famous role was a gypsy queen, a crone-like keeper of great secrets who rescues the hero from the villain's plot against him.[104] "Breeches" parts like Romeo, in *Romeo and Juliet*, also made the tall, powerfully built, and husky-voiced actress's career.[105] Contemporaries praised her Romeo's fencing skills, marveling at love scenes "of so erotic a character that no man would have dared indulge in them."[106] On stage Cushman was celebrated for what she was not or never could be: an all-powerful crone, a prostitute, and Shakespeare's most romantic male lead.[107] Her breeches parts offered audiences a means to imaginatively question the very nature or sex roles. While several factors must have helped to make women playing men in breeches parts "a particular phenomenon of the nineteenth century stage," certainly the chance to interrogate the alleged immutability of sex differences must have been among them.[108] At the time, women rights activists who questioned such assumptions faced

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[104] Meg Merrilies, in an adaptation of Sir Walter Scott's *Guy Mannering*, see Dudden, 86-7.

[105] On Cushman's reputation as "the best breeches figure in America," see Denise A. Wallen, "Such a Romeo as We Had Never Ventured to Hope For," in Shanke and Marra, ed., 41-62; Dudden, 92-9.

[106] John Coleman, *Fifty Years of an Actor's Life vol. I* (New York: Hames Pott and Co., 1902), 363. On how Cushman's Romeo seemed to reflect her own same sex desires, see Walen.

[107] Joseph Leach, *Bright Particular Star* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1970), 130.

[108] Quote from Bernard Hewitt, *Theater U.S.A.* (New York: McGraw Hill, 1959), 133. For an historian who considers breeches roles primarily a means for men to gape at women's legs, see Tracy Davis, "Questions for a Feminist Methodology in Theater History," in Thomas Postlewait and Bruce A. McConachie eds., *Interpreting the Theatrical Past* (Iowa City: University of Iowa Press, 1989), 79. Dudden takes exception with this view in the case of Cushman, 217, ftnt. 48. Johnson takes a more pragmatic tack, noting the roles vastly improved women's chances at good roles and allowed experienced players to enact juvenile leads that would have gone to inexperienced boys,

ridicule or worse. Yet contemporaries noted how "the most respectable female audiences" watched women fighting duels and making love to other women "with much apparent satisfaction," displaying how the playhouse permitted demonstrations that in everyday life produced only real fights.[109]

Press stories about Cushman's true self, or "personality," could not simply valorize how she was in life exactly as she appeared on stage. Cushman assiduously cultivated a persona in the press that offered audiences a deeper, hidden truth about her identity—one demonstrating she was a woman of "private virtues."[110] Stories about her private life played a key role in this narrative: her birth as a Boston Brahmin; the collapse of her father's business; her turn to the stage after his death in order to support her sister, brother, and mother.[111] Cushman initiated this presentation, publishing a story entitled, "Excerpts from My Journal: The Actress," in *Godey's Lady's Book*.[112] Sold as part autobiography, part plea to recognize acting as providing women with perhaps their best financial alternative, the piece spotlighted how vulnerable ladies were in a cruel world

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59-60. No definitive answer is possible, but it seems to me that given their popularity with women audiences—a point all authors agree upon—the popularity of breeches parts must have been partially due to women's enjoyment of their sex defying gender conventions. Men could see women wearing much less than tights under billowing short robes on stage by this time.

[109] Benjamin Brown, *Witness to the Young Republic: A Yankees Journal, 1828-79*, quoted in Dudden, 94

[110] *New Yorker* critic writing in 1836, quoted in Dudden, 83. DeCordova argues that the modern star system made room for diverging understandings of stars' roles and their private lives and the system increasingly held private, sexual knowledge about the star to provide the key to unlocking the true person beneath the façade of their performances. My point here is that this process began with the treatment of stage actresses much earlier because the split was necessary for them to perform in public and simultaneously protect, and even elevate, their stature as private individuals. Ben Singer misreads deCordova on this point, claiming that a star's roles and private lives merely converged in Hollywood's star system.

[111] See Dudden, 77; Johnson, 109-111.

[112] Quoted in Dudden, 83-4.

ruled by the vagaries of the market place. Such a tack invited readers to share in the "secret" knowledge of her true self—her good birth, misfortune, and fight to protect domestic dependents—behind the masks she wore on stage and return her to good fortune by applauding otherwise ruinous behavior. Audiences did just that, making Cushman a wealthy woman of unrivalled public stature. "I feel much better about womankind," confided playwright Julia Ward Howe about Cushman's 1857 triumph.[113] An 1874 letter from an "unmarried lady," a status the actress shared throughout her life, put a finer point on the emotions her success elicited.[114] The writer "felt proud to direct other ladies who were struggling for their bread, to take example from your noble career, and work out for themselves an independent and individual life." The dearth of such examples haunted her praise: "As a working woman I am under obligation to you for the footprints you leave on the sands of time."

By the late nineteenth century, the new audiences, star performers, and playwrights associated with the so-called legitimate stage helped to alter the melodramatic aesthetic that shaped some of its most popular plays; this change would later impact the roles played by Pickford and some of her contemporaries. Women characters were at the center of the action in these new kinds of melodramas that were frequently written, adapted, or commissioned by women.[115] Variously labeled

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[113] Quoted in Leach, 278.
[114] Letter to Charlotte Cushman, November 2, 1874, quoted in Dudden, 77.
[115] Two prominent historians, Lawrence Levine and Robert Allen, used Grimsted's *Melodrama Unveiled* to interpret the significance of women's roles though Grimsted paid little attention to women or gender. Other have demonstrated these heroines more varied pursuits after 1850, including, Davies, 41; Dudden, 70-8; Rosmarie Blank, "The Second Face of the Idol," in Helen Krich Chinoy and Linda Walsh Jenkins eds., *Women in the American Theater,* (New York: Crown Publishers, 1981); Martha Vicinus, "Helpless and Unfriended," in Judith L. Fisher and Stephen Watt eds., *When They Weren't Doing*

sensational, immoral, problem, and of the emotional hydraulic school, they displayed innovations in the stock characters and typical plot devices: new kinds of active, independent heroines drove the stories of some; in others chance, responsibility, and consent came to play a new role in evaluating the character of women.[116] As the story of Cushman's private life had prefigured, initially misfortune or the threat to a loved one justified the exercise of a heroine's will. A heroine, not a hero, executed the first hair's breadth rescue of a victim strapped to railroad tracks, battering through a train station door with an axe while her helpless beloved shouts "Courage!" and "That's a true woman!"[117] Other plays tackled the sexual double standard that judged chastity as central to a woman's worth and meaningless to a man's.[118] This was the subject of *Camille*, one of the two most popular plays performed after mid-century.[119] Every great actress demanded to assail the role of Marguerite, the beautiful courtesan heroine who sacrifices herself for her lover, displaying that even fallen women might be more than she appeared. Male reviewers condemned the "fallen" Marguerite as despicable, calling the play a "deification of prostitution."[120] Yet the play's popularity with women audiences, and divas demanding to pass the "test" of the role, spawned a host of imitators who

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Shakespeare (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 1989); Gabrielle Hyslop, "Deviant and Dangerous Behavior," *Journal of Popular Culture* 19 (Winter, 1985).

[116] On these later melodramas, see Stephen Stanton ed., *Camille and Other Plays* (New York: Hill and Wang, 1957). Stanton notes they downplayed offering a moral lesson in favor of intense action and suspense over a secret known to the audience but withheld from several characters engaged in a battle of wits until its revelation in the climatic scene serves.

[117] Augustin Daly's *Under the Gaslight* (1867), quoted in McConachie, 221.

[118] On how plays that went too far in their critique see Dudden, 136-7.

[119] On the popularity of *Camille*, see Stanton, xxvvi.

[120] Quoted in Dudden, 228, ftnt. 22.

explored the erring woman's relationship to society.[121] One reviewer blamed these "morbid fictions"—and the "herd" of women who wrote them—for ejecting the work of Shakespeare, Scott, and Dickens from its proper place.[122]

These changes shaped the conventions in which motion pictures developed. By 1900, the legitimate stage was an institution dominated by stars in plays that increasingly catered to the tastes of ladies with time enough for leisure.[123] Directors were distinctly less important than top draw actresses, and handsome matinee idols preened to keep women returning for anther look.[124] By 1910, surveys by theatrical producers and the estimates of critics declared that women composed between two-thirds and three quarters of even performances at night.[125] One Columbia University professor summed up this new reality, writing "every student of the contemporary theater knows that the destiny of our drama has lain for a long time in the hands of women," noting that while "Shakespeare wrote for an audience made up mainly of men and boys…Ibsen and Pinero have written for an audience made up mainly of women."[126] The professor neglected to add that several of the two playwrights' best-known plays featured iconoclastic,

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[121] Clayton Hamilton, "The Career of Camille," in *The Theory of the Theater* (New York: Henry Holt, 1910), 369-71. The author credits a large share of the play's success to the desire of stars to play Marguerite.
[122] Quoted in Dudden, 137.
[123] For good synthesis of the literature on this shift, see Butsch, 66-80; 121-138. The author notes how critics' attack of this female audience by 1900 was "strikingly misogynist," 123.
[124] For an insightful look at how these stars embodied conventions associated with the "new woman," see Glenn, chap 1.
[125] Schubert survey and critic Walter Prichard Eaton, "Women as Theater-Goers," *Woman's Home Companion* 37 (October 1910): 79.
[126] Columbia University professor Clayton Hamilton, "Organizing the Audience," *The Bookman* (October 1911): 34. The fact that *The Bookman* was an English periodical, Ibsen and Pinero were Europeans writing about and for women, and that the French Sarah Bernhardt was perhaps the most famous player of the nineteenth century, suggests a trans-Atlantic dimension to this development.

controversial female leads whose behavior questioned or defied the constraints of true womanhood.[127] One long, hard decade before women won the right to vote, he declared the theater "the one great public institution in which 'votes for women' is the rule, and men are overwhelmingly outvoted."[128] Acting had also become one of the largest professional occupations employing women by that period.[129] While nursing and teaching employed many more, both occupations demanded an education, forbade marriage, and paid barely subsistence wages.[130] The stage was the sole profession open to women with the fewest resources—women who would have otherwise worked from sunup to sundown in filthy factories, stood six and half days at a department store counter selling products they were often unable to afford, or served at the beck-and-call of a mistress nearly every hour of each day.[131] Women earned the same as men for equal work only as performers and writers. And as lionized actresses like Cushman came to outnumber their male counterparts and used their clout to take companies on the road, the stage became a singular arena for women to exercise control over the men and women who worked along side them.[132]

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[127] I refer to Henrik Ibsen's *A Doll's House* (1894) and *Hedda Gabler* (1903) and Arthur Wang Pinero's *The Second Miss Tanqueray* (1893) and *The Amazons* (1894).
[128] Hamilton, "Organizing the Audience," 34.
[129] Joseph Hill, *Women in Gainful Occupations, 1870 to 1920*; *Census Monograph IX* (Westport: Greenwood Press, 1970, rpt. 1929), 42.
[130] Nancy Cott, *The Grounding of Modern Feminism* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1987), 190-1.
[131] On women's wage work options and conditions in this period, see Barbara Wertheimer, *We Were There* (New York: Pantheon Books, 1977), 95, 157. On the comparably excellent wages paid to even the lowest paid actresses in this period, see Johnson, 54-57. For instance, the beginning salary of a "ballet-girl" at mid-century was $3 to $4 dollars a week, doubling to $8 after one month; the typical factory wage averaged $1.50 a week in the period.
[132] According to *The New York Mirror Annual*, by the late 19C there were more woman stars than men, which listed 73 women (7.7% of total actresses) and 68 men (4.7 of total

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Mary Pickford's personality and professional trajectory owed much to trends first established on the legitimate stage. But the tools at the disposal of early Hollywood's publicists were much more elaborate than in Cushman's day. Mary's public might daily consume myriad close-ups on screens as well as countless photographs and press stories reproduced nationwide that explored the details of her "private" self. Through such publicity the girl with the curls on screens became well known as a skilled business woman, the highest paid woman in the world, and an active supporter of women's rights.[133] Her future business partner Charlie Chaplin was "astonished at the legal and business acumen of Mary," as she "coolly referred to the overlap and contradiction in paragraph D, article 24," prompting Chaplin to come up with another of her enduring nicknames: "Bank of America's Sweetheart"[134] Pickford, in other words, may have played an increasingly *Little Princess* on celluloid by the late teens, but she was also indisputably a real life adult Queen.[135] These two images—one a perennial youth involved in a perpetual process of self-definition and the other a trailblazing professional engaged with adult concerns—were entwined in the projection of her total personality.

A widely distributed picture of Pickford used to support the call for woman suffrage displayed how both elements of her personality could be combined to justify

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actors). Reprinted in Benjamin McArthur, *Actors and American Culture, 1880-1920* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1984), 13-4. On how mostly ex-actresses moved into managing theaters when pushed out of other commercial ventures, see Johnson, 63-74. On the remarkable career of actress/manager Laura Keene, see Dudden, 123-48.

[133] Mary Pickford Core Clipping File, AMPAS displays how central her salary and business renegotiations were in reporting on the actress.

[134] Charlie Chaplin, *My Autobiography* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1964), 222.

[135] In 1917, half of the six features released by Artcraft included "little" in the title: *The Poor Little Rich Girl*; *The Little American*; and *The Little Princess*.

women's access to equal voting rights. Those who sought to deny women the right to vote claimed that political participation would unsex women, mean the ruination of the family, and painted suffragists as a kind of freakish third sex—neither fish nor fowl.[136] Dressed in a white embroidered lace sheath dress with princess sleeves, manicured curls perfectly arranged and eyes demurely cast-down reading, the photograph directs the reader's eye to the newspaper's headline, "VOTES FOR WOMEN," positioned in front of her beatific smile. How, the picture seems to ask, could anyone accuse such a sweet, young thing of wanting anything that would harm American womanhood?

Unlike Buffalo Bill's celebrity, Pickford's personality traded on extending the performer's film portrayals with "real life" publicity stories that served to complicate, and sometimes even contradict, performances on screens.[137] Press stories, interviews, and the syndicated column "Daily Talks" that Pickford (ghost) wrote between 1915 and 1917, focused on her salary and work, made no secret of her real age, which only emphasized her acting ability, or the fact that her husband was actor Owen Moore. Whether geared toward working or middle class readers, stories focused on Pickford's

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[136] On how the awareness of this perception increasingly led suffragists to use actresses and other glamorous front women, see Albert Auster, *Actresses and Suffragists; Women in the American Theater, 1890-1920* (New York: Praeger, 1984); Ellen DuBois, *Harriet Stanton Blatch and the Winning of Woman Suffrage* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1997); Margaret Finnegan, *Selling Suffrage: Consumer Culture and Votes for Women* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1999).

[137] DeCordova argues that the turn to discussions about the "real lives" of picture personalities was one of the primary characteristics in the discourse that signals the emergence of the movie star. Part of what the star system offers fans, he argues, is outside knowledge about these actors, knowledge that supports the differentiation of stars' films as commodities. For a discussion of the centrality of economic independence and the expression of sexuality to the concept of women's emancipation in modern feminism, see Cott, chap. 1. Glenn notes the importance of women's material experiences in theater to producing lives that necessarily had to embody some aspects of the feminist or New Woman and that these ideas were then translated to their audience through performance, 3-7.

work and earnings were a favorite subject in the women's magazines which held her up as model of professionalism to follow. A piece allegedly written by Pickford in *The Ladies' Home Journal*—the largest circulation women's monthly and one that targeted primarily middle class readers—addressed the curiosity of fans about her work.[138] Next to her age, ("twenty four, but someday I may not want to tell it") she claimed the question most frequently asked in the more than five hundred letters she received daily was, "'How much do I make?'"[139] After correcting fans that she earned only $50,000 rather than the $1-200,000 they assumed, she discussed the work of acting at length. "I enjoy my work immensely; there is a wonderful fascination in the ever changing scenes and the varied excitement. The variety, too, keeps it from being hard work."

Given that only one quarter of wage earning women were estimated to earn the eight dollars a week that constituted a living wage in 1914, Pickford's salary of $50,000 for satisfying and exciting work made it easy to imagine why "thousands of American girls" wrote her "to ask about motion picture acting as a profession."[140] Months later, when the working women's monthly *The Ladies' World* announced Pickford the winner of a reader's popularity contest "her hundred thousand dollar a year salary" was again a central part of the reporting.[141] Rather than inciting envy among her readers, the announcement extolled how her "photo-play supremacy…justified" her salary by

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[138] On the readership of *Ladies' Home Journal*, see Marchand, 54, 112.
[139] Mary Pickford, "The Best Known Girl In America; Mary Pickford Tells What It Is Like to be a 'Movie' Actress," *Ladies' Home Journal* (January 1915): 9.
[140] Estimate by economist John Commons quoted in Alice Kessler-Harris, *Women Have Always Worked* (New York: Feminist Press, 1981), 63. Pickford, "The Best Known Girl In America," *Ladies' Home Journal*, 9.
[141] "Mary Pickford Wins! Her Letter to Our Readers," *The Ladies' World* (April 1915): n.p., Pickford Core Clipping File, AMPAS. Pickford won with 1,147,550 votes out of 2,682,900, and was followed by Alice Joyce, Mary Fuller, Blanche Sweet, Clara Kimball Young, and Norma Phillips.

stressing the breadth of Pickford's professional achievements. "Her versatility of talent is marvelous, and is evidenced by the fact that she writes as well as she acts."

As Zukor had predicted, the public chose its favorites and the idols selected were, like Pickford, often one of the "girls."[142] The increasingly female audience for the movies selected many deserving of its allegiance, but a disproportionate number of the players who earned the interest and, indeed, the most enduring loyalty of audiences during the era of silent features were other women.[143] "Remember this was the day of *women*," screenwriter Lenore Coffee recalled, "Beautiful women in full flower."[144] Clearly screen actors like Charlie Chaplin, William Hart, Wallace Reid, and Douglas Fairbanks were huge stars. However, when one subtracts Western heroes and comedians from stars considered capable of opening pictures—or, as we will see, worthy of independent producing companies in Early Hollywood—the list that remains is predominantly the leading ladies of the day. Perhaps this was because women starred in

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[142] On the decline and segregation of the Western genre at this time, see my ftnt. 3.

[143] For an exploration that tries to determine the loyalty of her female fans, see Adela Rogers St. Johns, "Why Does the World Love Mary?" *Photoplay* (December 1921): 108-11. This is a general impression of mine formed by reading in the period and supported, but is not meant to claim that men were not popular as well. However, when one subtracts Western heroes and comedians from those considered most capable of opening pictures—or worthy of independent producing companies—the list that remains is predominantly the leading ladies of the day. Even with such men included, the number of females among the highest paid performers outranked the number of men. For such a list in 1923, see Koszarski, 116. Important contemporary views of this include three of the most important men involved in pioneering feature fiction films and the studio system: Adolph Zukor, Cecil DeMille and Jesse Lasky. See DeMille to Lasky, February 8, 1917, for the claim that the CA branch of FPL could out perform and better please the public than the NY branch with 10 stars of whom only one is male, quoted in Cherchi and Codelli, eds., 489-91.

[144] Lenore Coffee, *Storyline: Reflections of a Hollywood Screenwriter* (London: Cassell, 1973), 45. Italics in the original. Actress Clara Kimball Young gave Coffee her first break writing in 1919, and interestingly the list of actresses she cites to buttress this claim does not include Young's rival, Pickford.

society dramas and romantic melodramas, the prestige genres of the day that were not coincidently understood to be most popular with women fans.

Early Hollywood's personalities, then, were a new type of Women-made-Women. Actresses like Pickford recognized that young women hungered for role models who, however fantastically, reflected the changed condition under which they lived, worked, and played. Pickford called herself "a woman's woman" in one interview, noting in another: "I like to see my own sex achieve. My success has been due to the fact that women like the pictures in which I appear. I think I admire most in the world the girls who earn their own living. I am proud to be one of them."[145] Playing to female fans by giving them a prominent role in creating their success was a common tactic in the publicity surrounding women stars, who also recognized the important role they played in many of their autobiographies. Such talk explicitly tied her star to a rising generation of working young women with different ideas about where they could go, what they should do there, and how they might dream.

Although Pickford's star may have burned the brightest and lasted longest, many others' glimmered around her light. In 1914 when parentless Tess strode across screens, an astonishing variety of female personalities shot, sauntered, and danced outside the reach of their families and before the eyes of fans nationwide. With the release of *A Fool There Was* the following year, actress Theda Bara became another great star of the teens.[146] Bara's name became common currency playing the Vamp: a new type who was

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[145] "Woman's woman," Mary Pickford Scrapbook, Robinson Locke Collection, New York Public Library for the Performing Arts. (hereafter NYPL-RLTC). "Sex achieve," Pickford, March 5, 1915, quoted in May, 119.

[146] *A Fool There Was* (Fox 1915). Print viewed on Kino. On the rigorous tying of Bara's performances at Fox and the end of her career in 1919, see Robert Genini, *Theda Bara; A*

neither good nor evil, but rather an amoral predator who used her sexual power to triumph over weak willed men.[147] The vamp's sexuality belonged only to her, even as her popularity registered the money to be made through the display of women's bodily charms. Most of the action in story lines about Vamps displayed their destruction of a man who took advantage of the day's sexual double standard by manipulating it to their own advantage. Nearly invariably, the vamp emerges unscathed in these tales, while the unmemorable leading men, embodying a sort of every-man-elite, end up wrecked on the shoals of her sexuality.[148] "Grab everything you want and never feel sorry for anyone but yourself," was how one played by Louise Glaum summed up their general philosophy in *Sex*.[149]

The personas of the stars who played the new type allowed the star system to articulate a more direct exploration of two issues confronting women: the extent of their sexual natures and the price they would be willing to pay to succeed. Neither Pickford's

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Biography of the Silent Screen Vamp, with a Filmography (North Carolina, London: McFarland & Company, 1996). Bara was born Theodosia Goodman in Cincinnati, Ohio.

[147] The best discussion of Bara as vamp is Janet Staiger, *Bad Women* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1995), 147-62. May briefly discusses vamps in the person of actress Theda Bara, 105-6. Higashi's chapter, "The Vamp," also focuses on Bara, arguing the type "symbolized man's objectification of his fear and hatred of women and the power she exerted through her sexuality" which actually denied them this power by attributing its source the occult."

[148] "A Fool There Was," *New York Dramatic Mirror* (January 20, 1915): 21. The film established Bara's star and set the formula for her performances in all but 6 of her 39 films at Fox. On the type, see Staiger, 147-52. I agree with Staiger's argument that part of what made the Bara-styled vamp interesting was how the type never pays for her crimes and punishes the "fallen men" instead, but I do not agree the vamp displays more psychological nuance. On how this formula contradicted the "women always pays" message that the Production Code would enforce later, see Lea Jacobs, *The Wages of Sin* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1991).

[149] *Sex* (Parker Read Productions 1920) Viewed at the Library of Congress. For a good article on Glaum after she had become a star, see Hebert Howe, "Vampire or Ingénue?" *Photoplay* (August 1919): 34-5.

sexually innocent ingénues, nor her real life persona, tackled such subjects. The publicity surrounding the actresses who rose to stardom playing vamps initially stressed a convergence between the type and the real life actress, creating a personality that was glamorous, adult, and distinctly non-American. Bara's publicity depicted her as half French, half Arab, clothing her in fantastic, other-worldly garb.[150] Olga Petrova, who became nearly as well known as Bara playing vamps, was exclusively promoted as "a European star."[151] Bara, Glaum, and Petrova were all fashioned as dark, distinctly non-Anglo-American exotics. Perhaps accounted for Bara's and Petrova's outspoken support of feminism—a new, controversial concept associated with women's interest in assuming equal sexual, as much as political, rights. A widely quoted statement by Bara claimed her sexual destruction of men as a long over-due vengeance for her sex, declaring, "Women are my greatest fans. I am in effect a feministe."[152]

The personalities of actresses Mary Fuller and Pearl White, who rose to stardom playing Serial Queens in the years between 1912 and 1916, exemplified another new feminine type that spoke to different tensions surrounding women's place in public life.[153] The first action-adventure heroines, the thin plots through which Serial Queens

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[150] On the promotion of Bara, see Wallace Franklin, "Purgatory's Ivory Angel," *Photoplay* (September 1915): 69-72; Roberta Courtland, "The Divine Theda," *Motion Picture* (April 1917): 59-62. See also Theda Bara Scrapbook, NYPL-RLTC.
[151] Randolph Bartlet, "Petrova Prophetess," *Photoplay* (December 1917): 27. Petrova is quoted as saying, "I am feminist."
[152] Quoted in May, 106.
[153] Wallace Davies, "The Truth About Pearl White," *Films in Review* 10.9 (1959): 544. Davies was the first scholar to note how these heroines "overcame the hazards and even rescued the hero," defying gender conventions in manner that "abetted feminist propaganda in those days." For an argument that the hero-heroine roles were reversed in serials until WWI, see Kalton Lahue, *Continued Next Week* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1964). More recently scholars have turned to exploring these heroines in a wider context. May considered serial heroines modern women who allowed female

raced justified following their leads' fearless, flamboyant adventures week after week, sometimes for years. These serials were the first films designed specifically to attract female fans.[154] Reams of print ballyhooed the simultaneous release of new episodes on screens and in women's magazines like the working class periodical, *Ladies' World*. The readers of the 1912 *Ladies*' contest who ranked Pickford the most popular star placed Mary Fuller—lead in the first serial *What Happened to Mary*, the brainchild of *Ladies'* publisher and producer Thomas Edison—third.[155]

Fuller's success inspired a slew of imitators over the next few years as young women seemed unable to get enough of these heroines' gun wielding, torture enduring, and fast living ways. Like Vamps, these heroines came under attack for giving girls distinctly unladylike ideas about how to behave.[156] A fan magazine piece entitled, "Lady Gunmen," displayed how instead of needing protection the personalities who played both Vamps and Serial Queens were portrayed as posing a danger to those who got in their way. According to the reporter, Louise Glaum and Mary Fuller could both handle a "six gun with all the sincerity of Douglas Fairbanks himself."[157] The head of Pennsylvania's censorship commission, Ellis Oberholtzer, decried how the typical serial depicted its

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patrons to enjoy their adventures vicariously, but were eclipsed by Pickford during WWI. Miriam Hansen, *Babel and Babylon* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1991) believed these heroines were part of the alternative cinema enjoyed by women in the 1910s that was obliterated with Hollywood's post War industrial consolidation. For the most nuanced investigation of how these serials and their Queens represented tension over normative audience practices and femininity in the industry's transitional period, see Shelley Stamp, *Movie Struck Girls* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2000), chap. 3.

[154] Stamp, 103-53.

[155] "Mary Pickford Wins! Her Letter to Our Readers," *The Ladies' World*, n.p. *What Happened to Mary* (Edison 1912)

[156] See the critique by former PA state censor and pamphleteer for censorship, Ellis Paxson Oberholtzer, "Melodrama, Serials, and 'Comics," in *The Morals of the Movie* (Philadelphia: The Penn Publishing Company, 1922), chap. III.

[157] "Lady Gunman," *Photoplay* (January 1918): 91.

heroine "in high air; in a sewer without an outlet; under straps on a log while the saw draws nearer and nearer."[158] "If I were to travel the country over I should not know where to find women who conceal revolvers in their blouses, or in the drawers of their dressing-tables," the censor continued, women who grasp "an iron from the fire-set on the hearth or seizes the inevitable paper knife to slay the villain, her lover rising in time to take the blame for the crime."[159]

Actresses like Pearl White, the most popular of all the Serial Queens, became stars playing parts that spoke to young women's attraction to exploring the world. In the first episode of *The Perils of Pauline*, White refuses the marriage proposal of her childhood sweetheart. Pauline declares instead that she intends to pursue "romances of adventure" so that she might one day write a wonderful novel.[160] "You know my adventurous spirit and desire to live and realize the greatest things," Pauline explains to her crest-fallen suitor. After having her physical courage and daring-do thoroughly tested, the typical Serial Queen settled down into the arms of a man; in one sense this provided a most conventional conclusion. But presumably the young women whom White claimed composed the bulk of her fans were primarily attracted to how these heroines endured and triumphed throughout dozens of dangerous adventures not the final minutes of the last episode.[161] Then, too, the fact that Serial Queens were promised safe haven in the arms of a loyal, patient mate willing to watch their back when the need arose

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[158] Oberholtzer, 55.
[159] Ibid., 60.
[160] Pearl White in episode one, "Through Fire and Air," *The Perils of Pauline* (Pathe 1914). Print viewed on Kino. White would later star as Elaine in three separate serials: *Exploits of Elaine*, *New Exploits of Elaine*, and *Romance of Elaine*.
[161] White told interviewer that the fan mail she received over the years was "mostly from women," including more than a "few mash notes," Julian Johnson, "The Girl on the Cover," *Photoplay* (April 1919): 58.

may have reflected how these actresses tapped their female fans' desires to embark on adventures without sacrificing the eventual companionship of the right man. Heroes, after all, had exercised such prerogatives at least since the days when Odysseus returned home to the patient Penelope. Two thousand years later, a little imaginary turn-about seemed overdue.

In a period when doing your own stunts was an accomplishment much publicized by the star system, what actresses like Pearl White did on-screen encouraged the belief that they must be exceptional off-screen too.[162] And, indeed, Serial Queens' on-screen penchants often translated into portrayals of real-life personalities who were even more unconventional than the characters they played. "For recreation I like beefsteak and aviation," Pearl White reported in a piece vaunting her devotion to automobiles and airplanes.[163] Questions about women's competency behind the wheel developed along with the automobile, and perhaps no where more quickly than in California, where cars grew up with the country.[164] "Should Women Drive Automobiles?" queried a San Francisco editorial describing a call by the Los Angeles traffic chief to ban female drivers from the road. The chief alleged that women drivers caused a disproportionate number of the state's traffic accidents. His demand incited "the wrath of motion picture actresses,"

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[162] For a piece that makes that develops this point, see "The Real Perils of Pearl White," *The Literary Digest* (December 4, 1921): 147-9. See also Stamp on this point, 143-5.
[163] *Moving Picture Stories*, February, 21, 1919, 3, quoted in Stamp, 143.
[164] Bailey Millard, "Should Women Drive Automobiles?" *San Francisco Bulletin*, March 1, 1920, 6. Millard claimed LA had more cars per capita by 1920 than any other city. This fact was substantiated by a 1923 survey of Los Angeles that judged the count of 430,000 private automobiles—one for every 2.9 people—the largest percentage of passenger car ownership in the world, see Howard R. Lamar, *The New Encyclopedia of the American West* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1998), 652.

the editor noted, "who think they can drive a car with their hands tied."[165] White's taste for modern high-tech, high-speed pursuits, then, was thought to be typical of actresses—just more dramatically expressed. Perhaps White's presentation accounted for Pickford's choice of her own favorite star: none other than Pearl White. Pickford's encounter with White on a train bound for Los Angeles in 1914 registered her attraction to an actress who publicly broke many of the rules governing feminine respectability among the middle class, rules that Zukor and her mother made sure that she maintained in public. "In awe I watched her enter the club car, light a cigarette, and in the presence of all these men, raise a highball to her lips. This apparition was Pearl White, and I was her devoted fan."[166] Indeed, an answer to a fan's query as to how she stayed in shape for the physical demands of the parts she played revealed White's influence. "I used to ride bronchos, drive racing cars, swim dangerous rapids and slide down precipices," she replied as if discussing an exercise regime no more unusual than a game of tennis.[167]

Thus the performance of another actress who pushed the boundaries of what women could do partially inspired Pickford's personality. In one sense the role of motion picture actresses like Pickford—an industry connected so powerfully in its infancy to conventions established on the legitimate stage—displayed continuity with incremental changes wrought over a half century. There women had carved out new places in public through publicity and plays that allowed audiences to view the meaning of womanhood,

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[165] Ibid. The captain in charge of the traffic bureau announced "that there should be a State law prohibiting women from driving automobiles." Millard admits that he could not substantiate the Captain's claim since the CA Department of Motor Vehicles did not keep records on the number of women drivers.
[166] Pickford, *Sunshine and Shadow*, 99.
[167] Pickford, "Best Known Girl In America," 9. Tellingly, the eager to elevate pictures Vachel Lindsay criticized Pickford's penchant "to be over-athletic," see Lindsay, *The Art of the Moving Picture*, 3.

of femininity as more complicated and multi-layered. This change was a necessary prerequisite for allowing women to take on other new roles. In catering to audiences increasingly composed of women, the stage first turned to new melodramas that revised the role of their heroines. In these plays, the vagaries of chance and circumstance justified these women doing previously unimaginable things. Equally critical, the stage also came to celebrate the personalities of its public women for the power and influence they wielded.[168]

Now, as motion pictures settled around Los Angeles after 1915, the star system began to advertise its women stars as dramatic manifestations of such changes; changes dramatic enough to mark that an important shift had occurred. As industry master-minds like Zukor and those who developed the Serial Queen genre attempted to elevate the stature of the movies they seized upon the conventions of the stage and its feminized audience, but like its predecessor this process produced unexpected results. Increasingly, the publicity promoting the exploits of Pickford and her sisters enticed women fans into believing the business was a singular arena in which they might imitate these new feminine models and, in doing so, redefine the meaning of female fortune and success. "Out in Culver City the girls are growing militant" was how one fan magazine described the exploits of group of dare-devil actresses in the industry's new home, "quick on the trigger, and not one of them is afraid of the smell of [gun]powder—they're used to various kinds."[169] Another writer turned to history to explain what kind of the opportunities the business offered to women in not-quite-yet-Hollywood out west. "The early years of the twentieth century brought to American women the same vast, almost

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[168] See Glenn, 1-39.
[169] "Lady Gunmen," *Photoplay*, 91.

fabulous chances that came to their grandfathers," intoned a writer interviewing Pearl White.[170] "What the expansion of the West and the great organization of industry opened up to many a young man," the fan magazine *Photoplay* explained, "the motion picture spread before such young girls as were alert enough, and husky enough, and apt enough to take advantage of it." "With the exception of Mary Pickford, I can think of no girl who has reaped her field of chance so completely, opulently, securely, as Pearl White," the writer declared. White's good fortune resulted not only because she possessed a brave, stalwart spirit that made her a "female Alexander" bent on finding "worlds to conquer," but also because she had "that which is really the quality of few men: the true financial instinct." In short, these girls were models of how to conquer a new frontier and come back with gold.

[170] Johnson, "The Girl on the Cover," 57-8.

Chapter 3.
Go West, Young Woman! Female Fortune and Success in Early Hollywood

Such prominently displayed tidbits about Mary Pickford and Pearl White in women's magazines like *The Ladies' Home Journal* and the *Ladies' World* augured the rise of a new field of journalism: celebrity reporting as news in the mainstream press. The field developed around plumbing the personal lives of picture personalities in order to serve them up as heroic guides for a modern age. One important reason for the movie industry's promotion of the field was simple: instead of relying on advertising for profits, Hollywood relied on advertising its stars. The gamble that audiences would pay more to get closer to personal favorites quickly paid phenomenal returns, creating the profits that fueled the development of early Hollywood. Louella Parsons became a leader in this new field, honing her craft by giving form to the figures inhabiting the motion picture business even before the industry and Hollywood became synonymous.[1] Parsons would be among the first, and certainly the most successful, reporters to write a nationally-syndicated daily column focused not on films, but on the news surrounding the industry and its stars. The success of journalists like Parsons would help to shape the developing field of advertising and the dynamics of consumer culture more broadly.[2] Yet Parsons's reporting between 1915 and 1920 also displayed characteristics that would later all but

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[1] George Eells, *Hedda and Louella* (New York: Warner, 1973). Eells was the first to dispute the common idea that Parsons's success was only a result of her association with newspaper magnate William Randolph Hearst. Parsons went to work for Hearst in 1924 and Eells sensibly notes that before this, the Sunday page of her column at the *Record-Herald* was syndicated in several other cities, that she had published a successful book, and was viewed as enough of an authority on motion pictures to lecture on them, 48-9. See also ftnt. 49 on her reputation when she worked at trade paper *The New York Morning Telegraph* between 1920-2.

[2] See Roland Marchand, *Advertising the American Dream* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1985), chap. 3.

vanish. In this early period, Parsons advertised the industry's women personalities as offering new models of feminine success for female fans—in a new frontier that valued women taking risks in previously unimaginable ways. And, increasingly, Parsons described Hollywood—as both environment and industry—as a frontier in which they predominated. In the process, Parsons would fashion an image and role for herself that afforded her a great deal of power not only in shaping women's imaginary of what Hollywood meant, but also in the business's emerging industrial order.

Parsons got her start in motion pictures in Chicago, where she wrote and read scenarios for one of the founders of the Essanay Film Manufacturing Company, George Spoor.[3] After losing her job at Essanay because an "efficiency man" decided her salary of $45 was too expensive, the enterprising Parsons used her experience to turn herself into an authority, publishing *How to Write for the Movies* in 1915.[4] The book was a hit and Parsons sold the serialization rights to the *Chicago Herald Record*.[5] Like many in the new business, Parsons had an instinct for serializing success. If a "behind the scenes" look at what went into writing pictures prompted such interest, then a similar approach to the "personalities 'up front'" might generate even more appeal.[6] And so Parsons proposed to the *Record's* publisher that she write a column "about the studios and the private life doings of the movie players" that would "branch off into bits of gossip" in order to distinguish itself from competitors who offered curious fans only rudimentary

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[3] Eells, 42-4.
[4] Louella O. Parsons, *How to Write for the Movies* (Chicago: A. C. McClurg Publishers, 1915). The book was successful enough to be revised and reprinted in 1917.
[5] On serialization, see Eells, 45.
[6] Louella Parsons, *The Gay Illiterate* (Garden City, NY: Doubleday, Doran, and Company 1944), 29.

film reviews.[7] Although Parsons continued to comment on films, she gave more and more space to sections like "Answers to Questions," in which she fended fans' queries, and to revealing screen players' identities in "Seen on the Screen."

A special new series, "How to Become a Movie Actress," most forcefully demonstrated the relationship that Parsons's reporting sought to cultivate with readers.[8] The paper's announcement of the series, which ran throughout 1915, assured readers that Parsons's "technical knowledge of the game" and status as "an intimate of all the big movie stars" made her uniquely "qualified to give inside information to girls who are eager to enter the motion picture field." In a rhetoric that would later become classic to advertising, Parsons established her credibility as an instructor capable of schooling her young, female readers in the art of composing a personality that would win them success. More was at stake in this lesson than selecting the perfect food to start your day: "Others have become rich and famous. Why not you?"[9] In short order, Parsons had reinvented herself as a new kind of professional guide, one whose "expert" assumptions testified to the limits of the kind or romantic individualism she preached, even as the career advice she offered challenged many long standing restraints regarding how young women should go about making their way in the world.

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[7] Ibid.; Eells, 45.

[8] Louella Parsons Scrapbook #1, undated clipping from 1915, Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Science, Los Angeles (hereafter LPSB). The Parsons collection at AMPAS contains press scrapbooks that pasted together everything printed about, or by, a person by a professional clippings service. The service practice originally developed for theatrical actors. The quality of the earliest years makes some dates impossible to read. I read the Parson scrapbooks from when they started in 1915 though 1922. The "How to Become" series ran on Sundays in the *Chicago Herald* for several months at the end of 1915. On the use of the "expert" strategy in advertising and how it was especially targeted to female consumers, see Marchand, 35-7.

[9] LBSB #1, n.d.

Parsons did offer readers some of the technical advice promised, such as a piece that went into great detail on how best to apply make-up for black and white film.[10] But the series primarily seemed designed to induce a self-reflective reverie in her female readers that encouraged them to take their day-dreams of self-propelled social mobility and risky adventures to heart. The prelude that opened the series whispered, *"Dreams—dreams most fascinating to young women all over America are coming true every day. Do you dream of becoming a motion picture actress and actually plan to be one?"*[11] If so, then readers were not to worry, since *"Not a day passes but some girl who has shared your fondest fancies is made exquisitely happy,"* the announcement assured. The format that followed involved Parsons soliciting tips and advice in short interviews with those already successful in the movies. The strategy fulfilled at least two equally important functions simultaneously. Parsons could advertise the individuals who inhabited the world of motion pictures by fleshing out their identities, even as her descriptions served up their experiences as fables of success to follow.

Parsons and those she interviewed in "How to Become Movie Actress" typically treated the ambition to become a star with matter-of-fact aplomb, contradicting the notion that such expectations were fabulous at all. Indeed, in Parsons' hands, this was precisely one of the central products offered by the motion picture business: romantic adventure stories for girls that promised happily-ever-after endings. The fact that the stories offered young women the chance to win satisfying, lucrative work that celebrated—rather than demanded the erasure of—their femininity made them unique indeed. Above all, Parsons

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[10] LPSB #1., n.d.
[11] LPSB #1, "How to Become a Movie Actress," September 15, 1915. Italics in the original.

cast young women in the role of active adventurers on a quest for professional success. Designed "to inspire the ambitious," they made a romance of young women's quest for professional success.[12]

Her column offered a host of contradictory messages about the qualities necessary to win success that in part imitated, in part further twisted, the ethics of chance and rational striving that had co-existed in the coming-of-age tales told to boys for over a generation.[13] Some of the advice sought to inculcate young women with the "masculine" values—like aggression and careerist self-promotional skills—that bureaucratic, industrial orders rewarded. Determine "if you genuinely photograph well," Parsons instructed, which studio "you think you fit best with, and then send them your picture and a letter saying that you would like a chance to prove your worth as an extra."[14] Here the hopeful's fate depended upon possessing an image whose value others would recognize, as well as the self confidence necessary to demonstrate one's winning abilities to others along a path that demanded starting at the bottom—as an "extra girl"—in order to reach the top.[15] Yet even as the course she suggested pointed in a direction that paid tribute to

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[12] LPSB #1, "How to Become a Movie Star," October 5, 1915. Colleen Moore, *Silent Star* (Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1968), 27, 73. The future quintessential flapper describes studying such interviews as teenager in her respectable middle class home in Florida. Similarly, Mary Astor also describes how a "'Fame and Fortune'" contests whet her appetite to become an actress, a pursuit that sent her family from a small town in Illinois to Chicago to New York. In retrospect Astor admitted "I was being propagandized and didn't know it." Mary Astor, *Mary Astor; A Life on Film* (New York: Delacorte Press, 1967), 2, 4-6. Parsons only mentions boys as possible aspirants once.

[13] On the dynamic in stories written for boys, see Daniel T. Rodgers, *The Work Ethic in Industrial America* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1974) chap. 5. On the intermingling of vernaculars of chance and control and the gendering of traditional cultures of chance more generally see, Jackson Lears, *Something for Nothing* (New York: Viking, 2002).

[14] LPSB #1, "How to Become a Movie Actress," September 22, 1915.

[15] LPSB #1, "How to Become a Movie Star," September 29, 1915.

the value of hard work, chancy factors such as "pictorial beauty" and talent entered into the equation of what would determine an aspirant's fate. "'Start as an extra in some good studio,'" Parsons quoted actor Crane Wilbur instructing. But Wilbur quickly tempered this with a statement that indicated the business was a wide open frontier ruled by the omnipotence of chance.[16] "'If you have talent they'll find you quick enough…The whole fabric of motion pictures is built of such new material that each branch is made of help extended to the unknown.'"

It should not be surprising that the column promoted a path to success steeped in the assumptions which supported the Protestant work ethic—demanding diligent effort to climb from the bottom up—alongside another road promising instant results tied to forces outside one's control. In order to qualify as a worthy hero, stories by writers like Horatio Alger required that young men exhibit a commitment to the virtues of constant industriousness, thrift, sobriety, and moral rectitude. Yet, as the plots of these books unfolded, ultimately "luck and patronage" became the architects of the hero's good fortune.[17] Here the relationship between form, as disciplined effort, and content, as talent and a pretty face, grew even more attenuated, as a girl armed only with confidence in her perfect picture went forth to triumph in one of the nation's fasting growing industries.

These contradictions multiplied when the figure of the movie director—portrayed as one of the aspirant's possible patrons—entered her column. Parsons wove strands of what had long been considered innately feminized strategies, willy-nilly, with others that had been deemed exclusively masculine. Approaches about how to get ahead "Find out the name of the man who holds your destiny in his hands," sounded a conventional note,

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[16] LPSB #1, "How to Become a Movie Star," October 5, 1915.
[17] Rodgers, 141.

advising young women to find their future master who might, genie-like, grant their wishes if rubbed the right way.[18] Yet Parsons delivered this pronouncement in the context of teaching aspirants the importance of making their own breaks. Armed with a name, she pragmatically suggested, one had "a much better chance." "Better still," she advised hopefuls to "discover when a big feature is slated for production. To succeed one must be both resourceful and inventive."[19] Parsons solicited tips from D.W. Griffith, the director made famous by the controversy and praise surrounding the recently released *Birth of a Nation* (1915). Espousing what she called the "Griffith doctrine," he declared that the best stock for movie actresses was "untrained" young women whom he could shape into great talents.[20] Directors Cecil B. De Mille and Thomas Ince—whom Parsons claimed put "numberless untrained girls on the road to fame and success"—also expressed a preference for molding inexperienced women to their liking.[21] Once given a break, these men instructed, an actress distinguished herself by being "patient and uncomplaining…always ready when her cue is ready, but never seeks to pose between scenes."[22] Such advice underscored that the route to impressing these men lay in acting like ladies on the set, even as they warned that that manly "courage" was also a vital part of getting onto it.[23]

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[18] LPSB #1, "How to Become a Movie Actress; How Can You Win Entrance to the Enchanted Palace of Your Dreams—the Motion Picture Studio? There Are Several Paths That You May Follow and in Today's Article You Are Told Which Are Best," n.d.
[19] Ibid.
[20] LPSB #1, "How to Become a Movie Star; One of the Best Known Producers Places Little Value Upon Stage Training and Contends that the Best Asset for Success is Inability to Become Discouraged," n.d.
[21] LPSB #1, "How to Become a Movie Star," October 31, 1915.
[22] Ibid.
[23] The first historians of the movies, Terry Ramsaye *A Million and One Nights; A History of the Motion Picture through 1925* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1926); Benjamin

One could reasonably object at this point that no matter how "unfeminine" some of the behavior suggested may have appeared at the time, at bottom, Parsons's series merely reinforced traditional gender conventions. Some might protest that if the movie business offered young women a path to success, it did so by requiring young hopefuls to create personalities that pleased powerful men. But such a view would underestimate how different it was for Parsons to succor women's active pursuit of a very public, attention-grabbing ambition. More importantly, interpretations that only emphasize men's power within the industry to define and decide what constituted a successful presentation of femininity do not take into account how such stories were often written by, and for, women, about successful women in the motion picture business.

As Parson's column evolved she devoted far more column inches to women than men. It would have been difficult for a fan following Parsons' stories, or any of the press accounts about Mary Pickford and Lillian Gish that filled mass market magazines, to miss the more than twice-told tales about the lifetime of experience they had accrued on stages before going to work with Griffith.[24] In fact, Parsons rose to the top of her field by offering stories that opened a window for readers onto relationships in which men and women sounded as if they shared their lives and work as equal partners. Her description of Clara Kimball Young's relationship with her director-husband was one such instance. Parsons presented Young as "The Ideal Film Personality" whose "beauty and brains and

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Hampton, *A History of the American Film Industry* (Toronto: Dover Publications, 1970, rpt, 1931). Both authors note the frustration on the part of directors about how little fan-fare they received and how only star's names, not names of even the most famous writer or director, were believed to have any effect on the box-office. Both men were insiders in the period, Ramsaye worked as a journalist for trade papers and *Photoplay* and Hampton was a producer.

[24] LPSB #1, n.d.

wealth" had made her "The Ideal of What Every Sixteen-Year-Old-Girl Would Like to Possess."[25] "Neither one of us would be willing to submerge his individuality into the thoughts of the other one, no matter how much we love each other," explained the actress.[26] Indeed, Young declared that although her husband may have been the director, "he is not always the boss. When I make up my mind I generally get what I want. Sometimes I have to argue with my good friend Mr. Selznick, my sweet mother, and my dear husband, but if it is for my ultimate good I GET it."[27]

Young's stubborn insistence at demanding her own way fit into the convention already established about the stage's strong willed women. The image of the actress was a visible sign of a dramatically modern woman: a glamorous, individualized, and assertive personality deferred to at work and known for abrogating many of the social codes governing feminine propriety. Griffith, De Mille, and Ince, all former stage actors in the "player-centered institution" that the theater had become, knew exactly what they were up against when confronting female stars.[28] Such a fact meant that even the most famous director's name—as Griffith's indubitably was before De Mille's replaced it by

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[25] LPSB #3, "In and Out of Focus: Norma Talmadge," February 2, 1919. This is the caption under Talmadge's photo.
[26] LPSB #1 "Here's the Ideal Film Personality—Clara Kimball Young is Playful Child and Brainy Woman," n.d.
[27] Ibid.
[28] Susan Glenn, *Female Spectacle* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2000), 217. Alfred Cohen, "Stars or No star—That is the Question," *Photoplay* (January 1918): 95-6, notes Griffith, Mack Sennett and Thomas Ince, battle against the star system, 96. For an interesting discussion of DeMille's struggle in this period to establish a convention that sharply distinguished stars and directors roles in favor of complete directorial authority and responsibility, see Cecil B. De Mille and Donald Hayne, ed., *The Autobiography of DeMille* (Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall, Inc., 1959), 180-1.

1920—meant little to the average fan and, hence, a movie's bottom line.[29] Only the star's name above the marquee, and the title emblazoned across it, translated into box office.[30] *The Exhibitor's Herald*, the trade paper for theater owners, endorsed a letter written by a publicity director in Toledo, Ohio that made just such a point. "Take it or leave it, the star system is what brings the shekels into your box office. This is a rule that might hang in the office of any theatre manager," adding "the name of about one director in a hundred means anything in a theater ad."[31]

Parsons's discussion of one former stage actress turned writer-producer-director, Lois Weber, displayed a woman wielding clout in the Charlotte Cushman mold. Her stories about Weber also offered readers a powerful inversion of sex conventions that revealed how aspiring actresses could succeed by impressing women as well as men. Parsons lauded Weber's "executive ability" when visiting the set of her 1915 Universal production of *The Dumb Girl of Portici* starring ballerina Anna Pavlova, pronouncing Weber "the most famous woman director and photo playwright."[32] The "most famous"

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[29] The auteur theory of cinema shaped how more than a generation of scholars learned to think about film. Driven by the desire to elevate the status of movies as art, it grew out of New Wave cinema movements, both here and abroad, and the professionalization of film studies. By employing a single minded emphasis on reading and interpreting movies as an expression of one individual's stable aesthetic vision it has explained much about the internal workings of film but little about the context in which they were made. Despite this education process, the average film trailer or advertisement still demonstrates that the industry considers stars its central life-line at the box office and to the public. The last decade has seen a movement away from this approach, often turning to questions of historical reception, production, and the influence of the star system.

[30] For discussion of the attempt to wean fan's off such an approach see, Cohen, "Stars or No Stars," 95-1; James Quirk, "Star Dust," *Photoplay* (June 1918) 18-20; Frank Woods, "Why Is a Star," *Photoplay* (October 1919): 70-3, 117-8. The content of an average fan magazine—focused as it was overwhelmingly on stories about stars—also bore this out.

[31] Letters from Readers, Harold Wendt, "A Trifle Long But Worth It," *Exhibitors Herald*, July 9 1921, 70.

[32] LPSB #1, n.d.

distinction was necessary because Universal alone held no less than nine women under contract as directors in the years that Parsons wrote for the *Herald-Record*.[33] By 1915 Weber was Universal's most famous director, male or female, with a style as distinctive as Griffith's. Little wonder that Weber's co-worker, director Ida May Park, boasted there was "no finer calling for a woman" than directing movies in *Careers for Women*, a well received 1920 vocational guide aimed at high school and college graduates.[34]

Parsons detailed Weber's directorial lineage: her start at Gaumont Film Studio in 1908 with her husband Phillips Smalley; their eventual move to the Rex Company to work with director Edwin Porter; his bequest of the production company to their "capable hands" upon leaving.[35] When Rex became a Universal subsidiary in 1912 the couple became production heads, but it was Weber who built a national reputation as a filmmaker. Tackling serious social topics in an effort to elevate the social standing of movies, Weber's films and image exploited assumptions about middle class women's inherent moral superiority for new ends.[36] "'It's all up to Lois Weber,'" Parsons reported

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[33] Universal was formed in 1912 when Carl Laemmle merged IMP with several other production and distribution companies. On the exceptional number of women directors working at Universal, see Anthony Slide, *The Silent Feminists* (Lanham, MD: Scarecrow Press, 1996, rev. ed. of *Early Women Directors*, 1977), chap. 4. Slide was among the first to explore the variety of roles played by women within the industry during the silent period. On Weber's career, see Slide chap 3; Ally Acker, *Reel Women* (New York: Continuum Publishing Company, 1991), Acker, 12-16; Karen Ward Mahar, "Women, Filmmaking, and the Engendering of the American Film Industry, 1896-1928" (Ph.D. thesis, University of Southern California, 1995), 174-95.

[34] Catherine Filene ed., *Careers for Women* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1920). For a positive review, see *The New York Times*, December 16, 1920. The edition published in 1934 dropped directing.

[35] LPSB #1, n.d.

[36] A concert trained pianist, Weber was from a religious, middle class family and worked for a time as street proselytizer for the Church Army Workers before she entered the stage after the death of her father. The first film that garnered her attention as a crusader was *The Jew's Christmas* (1913), an attack on ethnic and religious intolerance. Weber

the director confiding, "'I am blamed or praised whichever way the picture turns out. Phillips would efface himself entirely and make me director in chief.'"[37] Parsons left little doubt as to whom she considered in charge, noting Smalley "came to [Weber] for advice upon every question that presented itself." By the time a "distressed masculine voice" from the wardrobe department interrupted the interview Parsons had made vivid the kind of gender inversion that flourished on motion picture sets.

The one tale in "How to Become a Motion Picture Actress" that partially sought to discourage young women's ambitions offered the most confusing messages of all. "HOW ONE 'EXTRA GIRL' CLIMBED TO STARDOM" found Parsons framing actress Ruth Stonehouse's career as one to "cheer the heart of every anxious to be photo-player."[38] The piece would have been more accurately titled, "HOW ONE 'EXTRA GIRL' *SHOT* TO STARDOM," since her progression from extra-girl with no experience to one of "Essanay's brightest stars" unfolded in only eight months. Despite her rapid ascent to the top of the profession, Stonehouse confessed she "'felt like telling every girl to stay at home,'" warning those she called "'the movie mad'" "'the profession is crowded now…it will be survival of the fittest.'" Unwilling to end on a discouraging note, Parsons interjected, "Haven't you something to say to the poor girls whom you so cruelly condemn to stay at home? 'Tell them that a 'pull' does not go in this business,'" Stonehouse responded, "'that unless they have the 'goods to deliver' to stay at home.'"

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later directed two controversial films on the "woman's" topic of birth control, *Where Are My Children* (1916) and *The Hand that Rocks the Cradle* (1917); a thinly disguised bio-pic about the activist who had recently coined the term, Margaret Sanger. An active club woman who addressed the elite Woman's City Club of LA on the topic of "The Making of Picture Plays that Will Have an Influence For Good on the Public Mind" in 1913., Mahar, 175-6.

[37] LPSB #1, n.d..

[38] LPSB #1, "How One 'Extra Girl' Climbed to Stardom," n.d.

In a sense, Stonehouse warned readers that becoming a movie star demanded the most traditional work ethic, since only the most deserving, industrious individuals could hope to triumph. Yet, the flavor of the piece encouraged young women to cast themselves into the fray nonetheless. As in all good adventure stories modeled around the dream of social mobility, eventual success was depicted as sweetened by the obstacles met and conquered along the way.

Parsons's own life mirrored many such struggles and ambitions, which she carefully edited into an image that allowed her to stake out new prerogatives based on their association with traditional areas of feminine expertise. Born in 1881, Parsons's autobiographical self-fashioning began with her fatherless upbringing spent writing stories that, in good Victorian fashion, were "always violently on the side" of "'a wronged girl.'"[39] Parsons claimed "this prejudice in favor of my sex has followed me along my entire career."[40] Published decades after she had become a powerhouse in the movie industry, Parson's autobiography sketched a girlhood seemingly ideally spent for one destined to guide young women toward new possibilities in a still perilous world. Indeed, although Parsons presented her job of professional gossip as a distinctly feminine occupation, she went to great lengths to claim for herself—and that of "other career women" like movie stars—the same "qualities of loyalty, square shooting, and straight thinking supposedly so exclusive of the masculine sex." She might be a gossip, in other words, but she and the motion picture industry's other successful women were not simply prattling parrots, prevented from assuming so-called masculine attributes because they

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[39] Parsons claimed she was born in 1893, but the real date was August 6, 1881, Eells, 28. For her story of a "fatherless" upbringing and quote, see Parsons, *Gay Illiterate*, 10-1.
[40] Parsons, *Gay Illiterate*, 12.

also exercised traditionally feminine means of power. Instead, her autobiography and column from these early years reveal an approach that sought to guide women toward success by combining masculine traits with feminine qualities long trivialized.

Whatever the precise circumstances of her childhood. Parsons's adulthood prepared her for such a balancing act. Part of the first generation of women to benefit from wider access to higher education, Parsons attended college while working sporadically as a reporter and teacher. Like many college educated women of the middle class, Parsons married later, at twenty-four, and then moved with husband John Parsons to Burlington, Iowa.[41] After marriage Parsons initially bowed to custom, quitting work and quickly giving birth to her first and only child, Harriet. But the marriage was not a happy one, and like the hopeful aspirant she was unwilling to condemn to stay at home, Parsons took her daughter to Chicago in search of better professional opportunities. When newspaper magnate William Randolph Hearst absorbed the *Herald-Record* into the Chicago *American* Parsons lost her job, despite the fact that her Sunday picture page was syndicated in eighteen other cities. And so in 1917 the journalist moved again, New York City simply becoming the latest stop in Parsons's own country to city exodus with each move taking her further from her Midwestern, small-town roots in Dixon, Illinois.[42] Parsons would later claim that the Great War made a widow of her by preventing a reconciliation with her husband.[43] Although no evidence supports the alleged death of

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[41] Eells, 35-42. Based on largely anecdotal evidence, biographer Eells claims that Parsons was divorced from John sometime prior to 1915, remarried and then divorced or annulled this second marriage during the late teens. Parsons eventually remarried Dr. Harry Martin in January, 1930.
[42] Eells says May, 1918, but the column dates back to 1915.
[43] Parsons, *Gay Illiterate*, 18.

her husband in the military, whether because of widowhood or divorce, at thirty-five Parsons was a self-supporting working mother living in the country's largest metropolis.

After working freelance for the fan magazine *Photoplay*, Parsons landed a job at the *New York Morning Telegraph* and was quickly promoted to editor of the motion picture section.[44] In the pages of this trade paper that rivaled *Variety*, Parsons continued with the intimate, chatty tone that distinguished her work. Readers must have appreciated her confidences, for in less than two years the paper's Sunday film supplement more than doubled.[45] Parsons's quick ascent in New York drew the attention of her competitors. A rival reporter at the city's oldest theatrical magazine the *Clipper* recalled, "By 1920 every motion picture columnist who got a break would automatically start gunning for her. Her column meant something. But I'll say this for her, she never pulled the knife first."[46] That same year Parsons accompanied her friend Olga Petrova—the writer, outspoken feminist, and film star best known for her Vamp roles under the direction of filmmaker Alice Guy Blache—on a trip abroad.[47] Parsons succeeded in contributing several columns to the English fan magazine *Picture Goer* while in London. The magazine also ran an interview proclaiming Parsons the "Queen of the American publicity writers" and "probably the most prolific writer of fan stuff in the States—which

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[44] See Louella Parsons, "Propaganda!" *Photoplay* (September 1918): 43-5, 115.
[45] From 2 to 5 pages, Eells, 44.
[46] Jerry Hoffman quoted in Ibid, 88.
[47] Petrova starred in 26 films between 1914 and 1918. Four were under Blache's direction, including *The Tigress* (1915) and *The Vampire* (1916). Not satisfied with such roles, she quit working with studios in 1917 and formed Petrova Pictures in order "to play strong women…I am a feminist," she explained to Randolph Bartlett in "Petrova-Prophetess," *Photoplay* (December 1917): 27. For further discussions of her life and career, see Fredrick Smith, "Petrova and Her Philosophy of Life," *Photoplay* (October 1916): 56-8; Anthony Slide, *Silent Players* (Lexington: The University of Kentucky Press, 2002); Olga Petrova, *Butter with My Bread* (Indianapolis: Bobbs-Merrill, 1942).

is going some."[48] Receiving the star treatment she dished out for others, Parsons was on her way to becoming nearly as much of a celebrity as those about whom she wrote.

By the time Parsons got her big, 1918 break in New York, publishers like Joseph Pulitzer and William Randolph Hearst had already taken several steps in the re-engineering of newspapers' purpose, look, and tenor. Pulitzer and Hearst began by designing well-made, daily papers to appeal to all readers, but especially cities' swelling blue and white collar workers who, as yet, had no paper to call their own. Using bold headlines, illustrations, cartoons, and a narrative style that many labeled "sensational," the papers with the most spectacular circulation repackaged themselves to entertain as much as to educate. Such tactics helped transform the newspaper into "an urban institution" which "like the department store, the vaudeville theater and the amusement park, transcended traditional categories of class, ethnicity, occupation and neighborhood."[49] The rise of the daily newspaper was linked to the rise of the city in other respects. Print offered metropolitan residents the feeling of keeping abreast of local goings-on once satisfied by a trip down Main Street. If plotted on to a graph the jump in the number of daily papers after 1850 would mirror almost precisely the jump in the number of urban places in the United States until about 1909.[50] After that date the consolidation of papers into chains that cost Parsons her job in Chicago resulted in a steady slide in the total number of mastheads. But the business tactics developed by Hearst and his like continued to attract new readers; the circulation of daily papers

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[48] Quoted in Eells, 89.
[49] David Nasaw, *The Chief* (New York: Houghton Mifflin,) 53.
[50] See Alfred M. Lee, *The Daily Newspaper in America* (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1937), 64.

outpaced the rate of urbanization after 1900.[51] The use of wire and feature services by chains exploded in the new century, recasting the newspaper from an urban institution into a national one. By 1920, much the same news filled the minds of men and women across the country. E.W. Scripps, a pioneer in syndication services, summed up his approach to ensuring the reproducibility of news nationwide. "'Whatever else it is, our newspaper must be excessively interesting, not to the good, wise men and the pure in spirit, but to the great mass of sordid, squalid humanity.'"[52] To ensure his editors understood the multitudes' tastes he spelled out, "'[Humanity] is passionate; therefore the blood that runs in our veins and in our newspapers must be warm.'"

Scripps's injunction to keep readers' blood near boiling echoed the tenor of melodramatic thinking already familiar to audiences over nearly a century of repetition in popular plays, dime-store romantic adventure stories, and the penny press. Now, emulating a melodramatic mode in news-stories and serialized fiction allowed publishers to draw on conventions that had helped to attract huge followings because—unlike classical literature and repertoires—they located drama in the lives of ordinary people. Current usage associates melodramas strictly with "women's weepies"; stories that stick close to hearth and home and register heightened emotionalism and sentimentality. But to audiences from Pulitzer's to Parsons's day, melodramas registered extreme emotions in a variety of genres, settings, and forms. Next to production values, Hearst placed melodramatic conventions revolving around polarization—particularly between good and

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[51] Between 1850-80 circulation increased about the same rate as the urban population; between 1880-1930 circulation increased even faster; people per paper dropped from 31.0 to 2.9 in this period. This varies somewhat depending on the chain—with Scripps actually encouraging more local autonomy. See Lee, 70-1.

[52] E.W. Scripps quoted in Lee, 10.

evil, rich and poor, male and female—at the center of the formula he devised to increase circulation in his early empire building years.[53] "Spare no expense," he ordered his staff, "Make a great and continuous noise to attract readers; denounce crooked wealth and promise better conditions for the poor to keep readers.'"[54]

Though absent from this dictate, by 1912 stories in Hearst's evolving media interests—of newspapers, national magazines, and movies—displayed the different place that female heroines occupied in the "melodramatic imagination."[55] Newsprint abounded with heroines like the fictional character Tess and "real life" personalities like Serial Queen Pearl White. In image and word, newspapers flaunted the adventures of young women who were strong willed, self determined, independent, and wild if sexually chaste. Hearst participated in displaying the change in women's role within the melodramatic vernacular most vividly as a co-producer of *The Perils of Pauline,* running the illustrated story as a Sunday feature the week before a new episode's release.[56] One early reviewer in *The Literary Digest*, a weekly magazine whose circulation and influence among the middle class crested after the war, pointed out the major difference

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[53] On Hearst's role as crusader for the working classes until he got more conservative and protective of his wealth in the twenties, see Nasaw, particularly, chap. 4, chap. 19.
[54] Quoted in J. K. Winkler, *W.R. Hearst, An American Phenomenon* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1928), 22.
[55] Scholars' use of melodrama largely derives from Peter Brooks, *The Melodramatic Imagination* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1976). Brooks defined melodrama broadly as a "mode of conception and expression, as a certain fictional system for making sense of experience, as a semantic field of force, a sense making system," xiii. His interest centered on its employment in the works of Balzac and James, arguing that it was tied to how events surrounding the French Revolution produced a demand for language suited to a democratic, secularizing society. For an excellent review of the extensive literature on melodrama, see Rohan McWilliam, "Melodrama and the Historians," *Radical History Review* 78 (2000): 57-84.
[56] Nasaw, 235-6.

in the film serial's use of melodrama.[57] Pauline was "the apotheosis of the old-time melodrama heroine," who would have "perish[ed] ignominiously if faced by half the perils that surround her more advanced sister of the screen."[58] Another reporter noted that while "stars of the first magnitude" like White helped to account for the serials "almost unbelievable financial success," other factors were at play as well. "Advertised all over the world in magazines, newspapers, and billboards" until "everybody knows that they exist" serials and their Queens became inescapable and, to many, irresistible cultural symbols through the interplay of media orchestrated by men like Hearst.[59]

Thus, by the time Parsons joined the *Telegraph*, she was perfectly positioned to benefit from, and to fashion, what counted as commercially viable news. As a late-Victorian turned working mother reporting on film personalities in a manner designed to attract a cross-class audience of women readers and fans, Parsons was an ideal personality to understand the touch required. Women had long exercised power on a local level through gossip, now this expertise was a nationally marketable commodity. The coffee-klatch-tone Parsons perfected suited the purposes of expanding corporate media structures that sought to preserve an intimate feel despite their scale, in the process further blurring the lines separating political and cultural news. By encouraging readers to think they were her intimates—not a vast and impersonal mass—Parsons cultivated the same relationship that movie stars had with their fans. Parsons's background, interests, and temperament also left her inclined to publicize the accomplishments of women

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[57] On how *The Literary Digest*'s influence peaked in the early twenties, see Frank Luther Mott, *A History of American Magazines, vol. V* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1968), 296.
[58] "The Real Perils of Pearl White," *The Literary Digest* (December 4, 1921): 147-9.
[59] "Movies of the Future; A Review and a Prophesy," *McClure's Magazine* (October 1915): 87.

associated with the movies in a manner that her female fans devoured. Rejecting the saw that a lady's name should only appear in print twice—when she was married and when she died—Parsons was a crucial participant in flaunting women's place in public. And, ultimately, in these years when Hollywood, California became "HOLLYWOOD," Parsons earned a following by advancing the change in the heroine's place within her melodramas one step further: she cast the real life women in the business as spirited, independent, resourceful protagonists in the development of the industry out west.

The industry's resettlement in Los Angeles coincided with transformations produced by, or coincident to, the Great War. The destruction of the previously dominant French and Italian film industries allowed producers in the U.S. to take a lead they would jealously guard for decades to come.[60] The industry also experienced "the birth-years of feature pictures" in the period.[61] And, after being ruled a business and not an art by the Supreme Court in 1915, the movies demonstrated just two years later how potent their art—and artists—were at the business of rallying support and raising money for the war effort.[62] Liberty Loan Films "left no doubt," Parsons crowed, "that the moving picture industry had placed a powerful weapon in the hands of the Government with which to spread American propaganda."[63] Since Americans had elected President Wilson on the

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[60] Ruth Vasey, *The World According to Hollywood* (Madison: University of Wisconsin, 1997).
[61] William de Mille, *Hollywood Saga* (New York: E.P. Dutton & Co, 1939), 175.
[62] *Mutual Film Corporation v. Ohio Industrial Commission*, 236 US 230 (1915)
[63] LPSB #3, September 20, 1918. On the huge success of the industry's Liberty Loan drive, and Pickford's role as it most spectacular seller, see Leslie De Bauche, *Reel Patriotism* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1997), 70-1, 119-20, 155-6. This of course was a claim popularized by George Creel, director of Woodrow Wilson's Committee on Public Information. George Creel, *How We Advertised America: The First Telling of the Amazing Story of the Committee on Public Information That Carried the Gospel of Americanism to Every Corner of the Globe* (New York: Harper, 1920). After

platform "He Kept Us Out of War" a year earlier the government needed all the help it could get. "Never before," remembered writer and director William de Mille, "had the services and personalities of our well-known actors been so much in demand."[64] Wilson may have "urged the whole population to 'give until it hurts,' but de Mille thought it took the "emotional pleading of 'Little Mary' to bring home the bacon." Indeed, the Liberty Loan Bonds sold when performers Douglas Fairbanks, Charlie Chaplin, and Pickford toured the country surpassed the industry's own spectacular standard of success.[65] Thousands in New York "to greet these three film stars but committed murder just to get a glimpse of Mary's golden curls," Parsons crowed.[66] Feature length story pictures and the industry's patriotism, together, improved motion picture's standing among the middle class, prompting the first official screening before the President and Congress.[67] Yet Parsons betrayed how the event signaled the industry's still precarious reputation: her hope was it might bring the industry closer "to that long wished-for day when the silent drama will be treated with respect and dignified consideration."[68]

Parsons's reporting during the war also displayed the outlines of the symbolic and industrial orders that were developing out west. "'Convinced the Coast is the place to

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the war political scientists and journalists like Walter Lippmann explored the ways in which medias like the movies had a new power to effect public opinion. For an account of scholarship on public opinion in the 1920s, see Hanno Hardt, *Critical Communications Studies* (London: Routledge, 1992).

[64] William deMille, 185.

[65] Nell Painter, *Standing at Armageddon* (New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 1987), 332-3. Painter notes all five series of the Liberty Loans were over-subscribed, raising an estimated $23 billion of the war's $33.5 billion dollar cost. She considers the exhortations of "a battery of famous people" central to understanding why people who could only afford to purchase bonds on credit bought the majority.

[66] LPSB #2, "Film Stars Here to Aid War Loan; Can You 'Guess' Who They Are?" April 5, 1918.

[67] On the decimation of European production during the war, see Vasey.

[68] LPSB #3 "Official Washington to See Liberty Loan Films," September 21, 1918.

make pictures,'" Metro's president Richard Rowland, wanted to build "a new studio out in Hollywood.'"[69] Since Metro actually planed to break ground in Culver City, Rowland's turn of phrase revealed how Hollywood had come to stand in for movie-land in general, giving Parsons's readers a scoop on a turn-of-phrase that was developing among industry insiders as early as 1918.[70] Rowland's decision to house all of Metro's employees "'under one roof with one supervision'" also illustrated another trend: giving a central producer the ultimate authority, and responsibility, over individual films.[71] The central producer system developed alongside the vertically integrated business structure that Zukor financed through the movie industry's first use of Wall Street funds.[72] An innovation designed to reduce the escalating costs of feature films, a central producer was charged with several unenviable tasks: deciding which costs on lavish "special" features were necessary; ensuring product enough to satisfy exhibitor's demands for a complete program change twice a week; and, perhaps most importantly, reigning in stars.[73] For

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[69] LPSB #3, "Metro Plans to Move Studio To Hollywood," September 20, 1918. I make this claim based on having read everything in the Parsons' scrapbooks at AMPAS through #8.

[70] For the first listing under Hollywood in the *Readers' Guide to Periodical Literature* (Minneapolis: H.W. Wilson Co), see "In the Capital of Movieland," *Literary Digest* (November, 10, 1917). Articles using the term proliferated in 1922.

[71] LPSB #3, "Metro Plans to Move Studio To Hollywood," September 20, 1918.

[72] LPSB #3, "Bankers May Cooperate in Lasky Undertaking," October 15, 1919. Parsons reported that FPL got financing to buy theatres from Kuhn, Loeb, & Co. and that it was the only company to have regular stock listed. On how Zukor was not the first, but only the most successful to do this, see Robert Sklar, *Movie-Made America* (Vintage: New York, 1976), chap. 9.

[73] The price of the average feature went up more than 400% after 1915 and "specials" much more according to Hampton, 167-8; Mae Huettig, *Economic Control of the Motion Picture Industry* (Philadelphia: University of Philadelphia Press, 1944), 27; Frank Woods, "The Academy for Motion Picture Arts and Sciences," *Transaction of the Society for Motion Picture Engineers* 12.33 (April 1928): 25-32.

most believed that stars were the major reason that the price tag on the average special feature jumped four hundred percent after 1915.[74]

Yet emphasizing the prominence of individuals—particularly the personality of the movie star—through lavish spectacle was precisely the principle that produced early Hollywood. In an era "in which the names of writers and directors meant nothing to the public," explained William De Mille, "the only thing the customers could count on in advance to give them some degree of satisfaction for their money was the name of a favorite player whose work and personality they knew and liked."[75] Zukor's plan had perhaps succeeded too well. Now "the people wanted stars, in fact they insisted upon having them." Cut throat competition for the most popular players resulted. After Pickford's deal with Zukor in 1916, lesser luminaries began to demand and receive enormous raises. Weekly salaries for contract players that had averaged $150-$250 a week in 1915 jumped to $1,000-$1,500 in 1917.[76] Stars like Pickford may have wielded particular clout in an industry organized around their appeal, but exhibitors unhappy with producers' attempts to dictate the films they showed and directors unused to the supervision of central producers also made choices that favored independent control over streamlined efficiency. As various alliances between these groups banded together new

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[74] Hampton, 167-8; Huettig, 26-8. Anita Loos and director John Emerson attributed the escalation in cost primarily to the rise of salaries paid to directors, actors, and writers and claimed that the average cost of a feature in 1911 was between $5,000 and $7,000 and by 1921 between $50,000 to $150,000 in *Breaking Into the Movies* (New York: James A. McCann Company, 1921), 51. This was born out in "A Visit to Movieland the Film Capital of the World—Los Angeles," *The Forum* (January 1920): 17-29. The article reproduced the accounting for a "special" which totaled $119,158.38 and spent approximately $54,000 on these roles—with largest single expense category on extras, noting "the average movie" cost between $25,000 and $50,000.

[75] William deMille, 233.

[76] Hampton, 146-9; 179-92.

producing companies still regularly rose and fell because, indeed, the term Hollywood studio did not yet solely conjure a massive factory-like enterprise.[77]

Realizing how far they had come in the half dozen years since they were anonymous figures, film players did not relinquish the ground they had gained lightly. And, in fact, stars patriotic performances had only increased their prestige and public profile by displaying the pull they had over fans across the nation and around the world. Pickford's real life turn as everyone's favorite *Little American*, on-screen and off, again set the pace. Seeking to capitalize on Pickford's successful wartime propaganda tour, Lasky asked DeMille and scenarist Jeanie MacPherson to devise "something typically American" for the star "something that would portray a girl in the sort of role that the feminists in the country are now interested in—the kind of girl who jumps in and does a man's work."[78] Featuring an adult Mary who routs the Hun and nurses French soldiers, the *Little American* targeted the audience that had made FPL the nation's most successful: the women whose adoration had made Pickford "the idol of America's young womanhood and girlhood."[79] The enormous crowds that mobbed Pickford on a trip to London after the armistice emphasized her international stature. Parsons quoted an editorial in a conservative English daily that called the actress "'the best known woman

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[77] Independent production was described by the trade journal as the "Most Important Event of the Year," *Wid's Yearbook 1918*, (New York and Hollywood: Wid's Films and Film Folks, Inc., 1921), 69.

[78] Jesse Lasky (JL) to Cecil B. DeMille (CD), February 5, 1917, Paolo Cherchi and Lornzo Codelli, eds., *The DeMille Legacy* (Pordenone: Le Giornate del Cinema Muto, 1991), 62.

[79] Adela Rogers St. Johns, "Why Does the World Love Mary?" *Photoplay* (December 1921): 110. Though written several years after the release of the film, the article is framed around accounting for her fame "for all these years."

in the world.'" "'Her face,'" the English writer contended, "'is better known than that of the President of the United States and she is the greatest woman of her age.'"[80]

Pickford's post-war turn also established the outer limits of where tensions over controlling the industry's personalities might lead. In the still fluid industrial structure of early Hollywood, Parsons placed Pickford at the head of those fighting the imposition of FPL's "factory methods."[81] With Zukor's efforts now mostly confined to managing financial matters in New York, Pickford decided the more corporate Los Angeles studio succored neither her nor "Mary."[82] When her contract expired days before the armistice Parsons headlined the actress's latest charge, announcing, "MARY PICKFORD WILL BE HER OWN FILM DIRECTOR; 'Daddy Longlegs' to Be First of Her Productions."[83] Pickford assumed the role of independent producer, releasing her movies through the First National Exhibitors' Circuit (First National), a cooperative distribution company

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[80] LPSB #4, "In and Out of Focus: Mary Pickford," August 1, 1920.

[81] Federal Trade Commission brief, Part I, 56-8 in case against FPL Corporation, quoted in *Harvard Business Reports*, 8 (New York: McGraw-Hill Book Company, 1930), 16. (Cases cited 8 H.B.R as requested.)

[82] The actress called the merger a shift from "an intimate little family group" to "a huge machine," blaming the low quality of her next two pictures on her "new masters," Pickford, *Sunshine and Shadow*, 105. Other descriptions of how the merger oppressed her include, Will Irwin, *The House that Shadows Built* (Garden City, NY: Doubleday, Doran, & Company, 1928), 251; Cecil DeMille, *The Autobiography of DeMille*, 180. See also correspondence between JL and CD in Cherchi and Codelli, eds. From the get-go JL was incensed about the terms of her contract, promoting a plan to allow FPL "to get along without her," JL to CD, August 18, 1917, 540-1. JL demanded that CD take Pickford firmly in hand and impose a new type on her roles, "The Pickford situation is really critical…She needs a director with force and you need not be afraid to do a DeMille type of piece rather than the Pickford type," JL to CD, Jan 11, 1917, 449. JL later recanted, proving Pickford understood her fans better, JL to CD, May 29, 1917, 531-3.

[83] Pickford's contract with FPL expired November 6, 1918, see LPSB #3, "Mary Pickford Will be Her Own Film Director," November 13, 1918. 8 H.B.R. substantiates Williams's claim that First National exerted no control over independent producers in this period.

incorporated in 1917.[84] "'The First National will have no part in the making of the picture," explained the company's president J.D. Williams. "'Miss Pickford is to select her story, her director, her cast, and, in short, be responsible for the entire production.'"[85] Created by theater owners who controlled some of the nation's most profitable and prestigious theaters, First National created a powerful distribution network that broke Zukor's hold over exhibitors by threatening (ever so delicately since boycotts were illegal) to exclude his pictures from their screens. After absorbing Pickford's films into their network, the threat First National posed to Zukor was complete. Rumors that FPL proposed to merge with First National soon pushed Pickford into a new arrangement to preserve her autonomy.[86] "'BIG FOUR' NOT 'BIG FIVE' FORM NEW FILM CONCERN" Parsons declared, referring to the fact that Pickford, Fairbanks, Chaplin, and

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[84] For a good discussion of the company's development that draws heavily upon the suit brought against FPL in 1921 by the FTC, see 8 H.B.R., "First National Exhibitors' Circuit, Incorporated," 13-25. Williams was the general manager of the company between 1917 and 1922. Under his management, First National supported the work of independent producers either by funding films or guaranteeing lucrative releases. Originally it combined the theaters of 23 exhibitors who agreed to show all the pictures purchased by the company in exchanges throughout their various territories. The report describes the creation of First National "an organized protest" against how Zukor's control of "the best stars and directors" forced exhibitors to buy his product "whether desirable not," noting the belief of members that Zukor sought to "merge the branches of the industry." The most complete secondary discussion written by a participant-observer claims that First National, through issuing sub-franchises in outlying cities, grew from representing about a hundred theaters to five or six thousand theaters. See Hampton, chap. nine. First National "brought into prominence and immeasurable increased the importance of first run theatres," William Marston Seabury, *The Public and the Motion Picture Industry* (New York: MacMillan Co., 1926), 21. Seabury was the General Counsel to The Motion Picture Board of Trade and the National Association of the Motion Picture Industry.

[85] LPSB #3, "Mary Pickford Will be Her Own Film Director," November 13, 1918.

[86] A.H. Geibler, *Motion Picture World* (February 1, 1919): 619, quoted in Tino Balio, *United Artists* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1976), 3; Charles Chaplin, *My Autobiography* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1964), 222.

Griffith would run the as yet unnamed company of United Artists alone.[87] Later that week, Parsons publicized the studio's name, noting stock would "be kept in the family."[88]

Readers of Parsons's column in the years between 1916 and 1921 would have thought this was just one, perhaps exceptionally dramatic, example of actresses' power. By the time UA incorporated in February 1919 Parsons had written dozens of stories about actresses running their own shows on the Coast. "The acme of motion picture fame these days is heading a company of one's very own," she had explained the year before.[89] After "Mary Pickford started the fashion by making herself the boss, it sounded so good" that other actresses "with sufficient backing and bank roll" sought "immediately to possess herself of a motion picture producing company," was how Parsons accounted for the trend. Clara Kimball Young, whom Parsons had called the ideal film personality, was only the first to imitate Pickford's actress-turned-executive trend when she formed the eponymous company with independent producer Lewis Selznick that same year.[90] *Photoplay*'s editor James Quirk disliked the development, calling it a "'her own

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[87] LPSB #3, "'Big Four' not 'Big Five' Form New Film Concern," February, 8, 1919. Parsons originally claimed that William Hart would be a part of the new consortium.
[88] LPSB #3, "UA To Keep All Their Stock," February 13, 1919.
[89] LPSB #2, "Doris Kenyon Latest to Reach Pinnacle of the Film Star's Ambition" March 31, 1918.
[90] With the exclusion of Chaplin and Fairbanks, I found no mention by Parsons in this period of actors forming independent production companies. Other actresses who formed independent production companies for at time not mentioned here include: Olga Petrova, Anita Stewart, Marie Doro, Gail Kane, Alma Ruebens, Madame Mureal, Ethel Clayton, Irene Castle, Justine Johnstone, Vivian Martin, Dorothy Gish, Louise Glaum, Lillian Walker and others. For a discussion that explores Lewis Selznick's important role in this process, noting that after he helped set up The Clara Kimball Young Film Corp in 1916, he went on to establish independent companies for Kitty Gordon, Norma Talmadge, Alla Nazimova and director Herbert Brenon, see Mahar, 303-7. For an autobiography of an actress who easily moved between writing, producing and directing, eventually forming her own company, see Nell Shipman, *The Silent Screen & My Talking Heart* (Boise: Boise State University, 1987).

company' epidemic" that did not bode well for the industry's health.[91] Parsons's talk about actresses with independent production companies employed no dangerous contagion metaphors, referring to Doris Kenyon—"the very latest star to be featured in her own company"—simply as a "lucky young lady."[92] In retrospect, Pickford's part in the formation of United Artists was by far the most enduring example of the clout exercised by actresses that Parsons featured between 1915 and 1922. Most production companies formed by actresses were short lived—whether because of mismanagement or the mounting difficulty of operating outside a major studio. The extent to which actresses actually assumed executive roles within them also varied widely. But Parsons ignored such pesky details, instead sketching the world of early Hollywood for readers with the bold paint brush of a Matisse. In doing so, she offered readers an environment were women routinely won unparalleled fortune, power, and success.

Indeed, Parsons seemed to justify the actress-turned-producer trend by teaching readers about the central role that actresses' value in the star system played in the industry's profitability. An interview with star Norma Talmadge forcefully displayed this lesson. After establishing a following at Fine Arts, Talmadge married independent producer Joseph Schenck, who "created a film company—Select—for her," Parsons explained.[93] Schenck may have managed the business details but Parsons left no doubt about who generated the dough. Talmadge more than "justified Mr. Schenck's faith in

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[91] *Photoplay* (May 1917): 121.
[92] LPSB #2, "Doris Kenyon Latest to Reach Pinnacle of the Film Star's Ambition" March 31, 1918. Other stories on this development for 1920 in LPSB #4 include: "New Film Corporation Formed," April 13, 1920 on Mae Murray; "Enid Bennett to Sever Relations with Ince," May 13, 1920; "Virginia Strikes for Liberty," July 4, 1920.
[93] LPSB #2, "In and Out of Focus: Norma Talmadge," no date. Schenck arranged to release the films of the Norma Talmadge Film Corporation first through First National and later UA.

her," she declared, making "money so fast" that he had begun "to consider his beautiful wife a financial as well as a love investment." Talmadge's role as rainmaker to Schenck's administrator was born out in the presentation of her work on screens. The movies Talmadge made by 1920 not only continued to display her name in font three times the size of his, but added a shot after the credits that emphasized her authorship and responsibility for what followed. "My latest photoplays, produced in my own studios all bear my signature," screens declared above an enormous, elegant reproduction of her script.[94] As for Talmadge, the former working class girl from Brooklyn pronounced herself quite happy with the arrangement: "Being poor may be romantic, but I like being just the way I am, with pleasant work, a devoted husband and a happy home…I can do things for my family and indulge in some pet charities."

Parson's seemed especially impressed by women who occupied purely executive roles, roles she indicated that, while still male dominated, were opening up to women. Parsons declared Universal's business manager Eleanor Freid "one of the 'females of the species' blazing a trail to paths heretofore occupied by men."[95] Freid had "piloted the entire Henry McRae expedition" through China and Japan "where her economy had saved Universal thousands of dollars" Parsons reported, emphasizing her leadership and economizing abilities. Noting Fried's seven year tenure as an editor before "her talent for executive management was discovered," Parsons offered readers an altogether uncommon model of a woman rising through the corporate ranks. "New Film Company Controlled by Woman," proclaimed a headline announcing the appearance on "the

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[94] *Daughter of Two Worlds* (First National 1920). Viewed at the Library of Congress. Many of the individual titles were also placed inside a box in which the initials "NT" were placed on top.
[95] LPSB #4, "In and Out of Focus: Eleanor Fried," May 15, 1920.

pictorial horizon" of the Catherine Curtis Corporation: "a new company headed, controlled, and planned by a woman."[96] Months later Parsons interviewed Curtis, "Who Says its One of Life's Easiest Jobs to Raise a Million Dollars in New York."[97] Although remarking that Curtis was "exceedingly easy to gaze upon," Parsons immediately quipped that the "very big names in the financial and industrial world" who backed Curtis were not the type to "listen to a petticoat for the mere sake of hearing a pretty woman talk." Parsons quizzed Curtis on the secret to her success, observing "a woman with enough business acumen to raise a million dollars…is not a common thing even in the twentieth century world of successful women." Curtis claimed inherently feminine characteristics gave women natural business advantages. Women "'have more tact, more arguments and are more persevering than men.'" Yet she advised more typically male qualities were most crucial, declaring "'the first requisite is to have confidence in your own proposition, then impress upon others the benefit of your plan.'"

Screenwriters, or scenarists, were the other most common female success stories in Parsons's column; the related topic of what constituted a good scenario consumed much ink as well. Since women had written the majority of screen plays beginning in the nickelodeon period, their frequent appearance as successful scenarists comes as no surprise.[98] But the rise of feature length narrative films, the still bi-weekly change demanded by exhibitors, and a growing emphasis on the pressure to produce "cleaner," "higher-class" pictures made the subject of exactly what constituted good movie writing a hotly debated topic. "The burden of every film producer's song these days is 'My

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[96] LPSB #3, "New Film Company Controlled by Woman," August 26, 1919.
[97] LPSB #4, "In and Out of Focus: Catherine Curtis," April 4, 1920.
[98] Lizzie Francke, *Script Girls* (London: British Film Institute, 1994), chap. 1.

Kingdom for a Story,'" commented Parsons on the result of these combined pressures.[99] Parsons sympathetically documented the efforts of movie producers like Samuel Goldwyn to woo "Eminent Authors" to write for the movies, and to reign in exhibitors threatening "to exhaust all the literary material in the world" into accepting "fewer and better pictures."[100] In her opinion, the problem often lay in other producers' insistence on turning out "cheap pictures" that "sold old fashioned work" which mapped out an "entirely conventional destiny for the heroine and expect[ed] the world to accept a plot as obsolete as the stage coach."[101] Perhaps Parsons's belief in the importance of stories possessing modern heroines explains why she singled out material produced by women scenarists, or adapted from the work of women novelists, as providing better models to follow. Since Parsons never specifically discussed cheap films or male scenarists her presentation suggested that only women were able to deliver the "higher estimate of the masses" she thought necessary. At the very least she left readers with the impression that women—or "girls" as they were referred to no matter what their age—were solely responsible for scripting the increasingly elaborate stories that filled screens.

Parsons also celebrated these behind-the-scenes players as personalities worthy of occupying a place in the star system. Often she accomplished this through a sleight of hand that traded on their associations with those more famous, advertising how these writers scripted the success of others. This relationship was most explicit in the case of

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[99] LPSB #3, "Film Producers Seek Material for Plays," July 26, 1919.
[100] LPSB #3 "Eminent Authors Active," July 23, 1919; LPSB #3, "Goldwyn to Make Fewer and Better Pictures," March 5, 1919.
[101] LPSB #4, "In and Out of Focus: Cheap Pictures to Blame," July 11, 1920.

scenarist Anita Loos—"THE GIRL WHO MADE FAIRBANKS FAMOUS."[102] A woman "whose satire has won her fame and fortune," Parsons called Anita Loos "the possessor of more originality and honest-to-goodness brains than any six-footer now engaged in plotting for motion pictures."[103] Parsons declared Loos responsible for raising Fairbanks from a "juvenile lead getting about $350 a week" to a star so fast that "he couldn't quite understand himself how it all happened."[104] When Parsons reported on how Jeanine MacPherson's new five year contract at FPL required "only two scenarios a year" so that she might "spend as much time as she wishes researching works" she used MacPherson's relationship with star director De Mille to explain the contract's terms.[105] Like Loos, this writer had not become "one of the best known scenario writers in the business" acting as a mere adjunct. Rather, Parsons presented the writer as integral to *his* success, observing she had "contributed most of the Cecil De Mille specials, in originals or by adapting them." Parsons also displayed Pickford as lending her glamour to scenarist Frances Marion. Marion "had adapted and written many of the star's best scenarios," she reminded readers before announcing that she would direct the actress at UA.[106] "Personally I think it is a splendid thing," Parsons gushed. "Above everything else," Pickford had "enough brains to recognize ability in another woman."

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[102] LPSB #2, "The Girl Who Made Fairbanks Famous," March 24, 1918. Loos had in fact made Fairbanks famous with *His Picture in the Papers* (1916).
[103] Ibid. This was the only allusion to a male screenwriter I found. Decades later she recalled that "Bess Meredith, Frances Marion, and Jeanie McPherson were the foremost scenarists of the day," Parsons, *Gay Illiterate*, 85.
[104] LPSB #2, "The Girl Who Made Fairbanks Famous," March 24, 1918.
[105] LPSB #4, "Jeanine McPherson Signs Contract with De Mille," June 26, 1920.
[106] LPSB #4, "Frances Marion to Direct Mary Pickford," July 29, 1920. *The Love Light* (UA 1921) would be the 11th feature on which the two collaborated. Marion had scripted such recent hits as *The Poor Little Rich Girl* (1917), *Rebecca of Sunnybrook Farm* (1917), *Stella Maris* (1918), and *Pollyanna* (1920). They two were close friends.

The consistent support for women that Parsons forthrightly expressed in her columns in this period had dwindled to a hint in the autobiography she published in the 1940s. Decades later, Parsons noted a "prejudice in favor of her sex" and observed "it always annoys me exceedingly to hear other women say that they 'simply don't get along with women' although it is implied that they are nine-day riots in male company."[107] These comments in the forties were timid in comparison with her column in this period. In the context of these earlier days, Parsons's public declarations placed her among the disparate group of individuals calling themselves feminists.[108] Women and men during the 1910s who began using the term feminist to describe themselves asked for more than women's legal equality, a demand most forcefully symbolized by the mass movement that won woman suffrage in 1920.[109] After the turn of the century many in the woman's movement proceeded to advance the cause of women's rights, in part, by narrowly focusing on this specific political goal.[110] Such a strategy attempted to forestall the efforts of opponents who sought to derail suffrage by linking it to feminism—a concept that was understood to signal a radical re-envisioning of women's place within society—

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[107] Parsons, *Gay Illiterate*, 12. More than once Parsons judges women this way, for instance complimenting Paulette Goddard on her "fine flair…for getting along with other women," 179.

[108] For a good definition of how feminism relates to and differs from most nineteenth century women's rights activism, see Nancy Cott, *The Grounding of Modern Feminism* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1987), 4-5, 8-10.

[109] The best single history of the fight to get the vote for women is still, Eleanor Flexner and Ellen Fitzpatrick, *Century of Struggle* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1996, rpt.1959). For a good critique for its ideological limitations, see Aileen Kraditor, *The Ideas of the Woman Suffrage Movement* (New York: Norton, 1981). The tendency to submerge differences and needs among women into a universal Woman who was often explicitly assumed to be white and middle class would—unsurprisingly—prove difficult to maintain after the ratification of the 19th Amendment.

[110] I do not mean to indicate here that a leader like Carrie Chapman Catt of the NAWSA did not endorse feminism. She did. But she considered its aims outside the purview of the NAWSA.

and to effect a common cause capable of uniting large numbers of diverse groups of women in the fight for the vote. One anti-suffrage league displayed how conflating woman suffrage with feminism allowed them to raise the many headed hydra inherent in the topic of women's emancipation. "Feminism advocates non-motherhood, free love, easy divorce, economic independence for all women, and other demoralizing and destructive theories," the Missouri Anti-Suffrage League declared in 1918.[111] The fact that there was some truth in the specter summoned up by anti-suffragists eased their job. For those suffragists who also considered themselves feminists were, indeed, interested in exploring many of the "destructive theories" mentioned by anti-suffragists. Feminists sought to call into question the whole architecture of customs surrounding sex roles and the meanings attached to sexual difference.[112] The elaborate tapestry that Parsons wove of women's behavior in the film industry in her column placed many of the movie industry's workers among their ranks.

"I am feminist," declared Parson's friend Petrova.[113] "By that I do not mean that women should try to do the work of men. They should merely learn to do their own work, live their own lives, be themselves," the producer-actress explained. "They should not be clinging vines, blaming men for all the ills that befall them, and forced to acknowledge men as the source of all their good fortune and happiness." Others had sounded such calls before. Nearly a century earlier lonely voices like Margaret Fuller's

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[111] 1918 letter from the Missouri Anti-Suffrage League to all candidates for office in St. Louis asking them not to ratify suffrage, quoted in Cott, 13.

[112] Of course here I refer to what scholars call gender today, a concept most thoroughly discussed by Joan Scott, *Gender and the Politics of History* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1986).

[113] Randolph Bartlett, "Petrova—Prophetess," *Photoplay* (December 1917): 26-7. All quotes this paragraph, Ibid. The article also describes how Petrova was "producing for herself, assuming full charge of every detail of her operations."

evoked a more complicated vision of human sexuality and ambition; her call to "Let [women] be sea captains, if you will" conjured a world where tastes and aptitudes, not abilities assumed to be fixed in the nature of things, set the limits of a woman's horizon.[114] Feminists in the 1910s renewed this appeal, seeking to steer an individual course without giving up the chance for heterosexual companionship along the way. Feminists asked that women realize their individual professional ambitions, admit the importance of their sexuality, and experience—like men, but as women—the pleasures and challenges that went along with both. Women who entered the professions around the turn of the century had avoided the question of how work would affect the sexual politics of the home by sacrificing one for the other: work and marriage and family for women simply did not mix. These mostly middle class, native born, white women—and, indeed, any woman still attempting to live within the mainstream bounds of respectability—who carved out new professional territory for themselves did so largely by maintaining exclusively female centered domestic worlds that, theoretically, erased their sexuality. But now, a larger number of women again began openly to challenge this opposition, taking on jobs in the outside world as well as frankly exploring their sexual natures.[115] This call for women's broader cultural freedoms, rather than specific legal improvements, opened adherents to attacks as "sex radicals" and "free lovers"—just the labels those in the suffrage movement most feared.[116] Critics charged that feminists desired nothing less than the destruction of the foundation of society: the family.

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[114] Margaret Fuller, *Women in the Nineteenth Century* (1845).
[115] On the Greenwich Village Bohemian group usually associated with feminism and sex radicalism, see Christine Stansell, *American Moderns* (New York: Henry Holt and Company, 2000).
[116] On opposition to suffrage, see Kraditor, chap. 6; Flexner, 286-300.

Helped in part by women's unusual war-work, feminism garnered more attention in the media by the late nineteen-tens.[117] One of the central questions tackled by such women was whether they might pursue paths that resembled men's, attempting the juggling of work, family, and marriage that was a commonplace of men's good fortune. Such a question, of course, was not new to many working class, most black women, or to actresses. But work after marriage for white, middle-class women was still considered so threatening to the social foundations of society that jobs like teaching—by far the largest occupation for middle class women—simply forbade the practice.[118] Thus Parsons's supportive talk about how women in the film industry managed work and marriage and a new kind of femininity endorsed a practice that was still viewed as unconventional, if not downright threatening. Indeed, movie screens rarely depicted such behavior. There being young and single was an important precondition to experiencing unconventional fun. Like the audience members they targeted, the characters of Serial Queens and the heroines played by Pickford were mostly young and single (and therefore unfailingly without children) during their adventures. But in real life, Parsons's column underscored how women in Hollywood were in the vanguard of women managing a career, marriage—with perhaps even a child!—and their identities as romantically attractive individuals. Despite the mounting opposition expressed in public debate toward the topic of work for wives, women in the picture business modeled women "having it all" and attracted piles of publicity in fan magazines as they did.

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[117] On the development of this aspect of feminism, see Cott, 213-5, 224-6, 230-9, 276.
[118] For exploration of these proscriptions and how work for married women became the central subject of debate regarding the question if women's emancipation had gone too far in the 1920s, see Cott, chap. 6. Cott notes that in 1930 less than 4% of all married working women held white collar jobs.

Women's management of this high-wire act depended on the help of men in her column. Parsons frequently featured husband and wife teams whose successes were inextricably tied together. Such a tack emphasized the teamwork element in these relationships while simultaneously indicating that their expertise made them more attractive to their partners. Parsons headlined an interview with screenwriter Ouida Bergere as "The Feminine Half of the Highly Successful Motion Picture Team of Bergere and Fitzmaurice; Wherein Both the Lady and Her Husband Figure."[119] The director and writer met working, married, and then conducted "a neck and neck race for fame and honors" Parsons recounted. Describing Bergere as a lady was itself a refashioning of that traditional marker of respectable femininity. Ladies, traditionally, did not conduct professional competitions with their husbands. Yet in Parsons's report, Bergere's behavior was not only ladylike, but it had produced a marriage she described as "a happy combination—Ouida Bergere with her brilliant, quick mind; George Fitzmaurice with his scholarly, more restrained intellect."

Occasionally, hints of society's opposition toward women combining marriage and careers entered Parsons's column. The announcement of Gloria Swanson's marriage described the actress as having avoided a trip to the altar because of her determination "not to permit matrimony to interfere with her screen career."[120] Swanson's change of heart about becoming a bride must have been linked to a change in this assumption, since the reporter assured readers she would "continue her screen work." Even more

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[119] LPSB #4, "In and Out of Focus: Ouida Bergere," January 18, 1920.
[120] LPSB #4, "Gloria Swanson a Bride,' December 12, 1919. Swanson did marry Somborn in part because she hoped he would help her manage the move from FPL to independent producing; when he disappointed and started living off her she divorced him, see Gloria Swanson, *Swanson on Swanson* (New York: Random House, 1980), 131-4, 142-63

dramatically, Parsons depicted women rejecting that all time badge of feminine respectability: full time motherhood.[121] When Swanson gave birth the next year Parsons observed that since "baby Gloria" had reached the ripe old age of three months she had become "sufficiently aged to permit her mother to continue her screen career."[122]

In these earliest years of her reporting, between 1915 and 1920, Parsons offered a tolerant view on divorce, a subject that had the power to instantly destroy a woman's reputation. The rate of divorce between the turn of the century and 1920 doubled from 4 to 8 percent.[123] Some blamed the rise in divorce, the decline in the birthrates among the white middle class, and the movement for birth control on not just feminism, but on the breakdown of proper gender roles more broadly.[124] In the previous decade, Theodore Roosevelt had popularized the notion that the "race suicide" of "Anglo Saxons" derived from a kind of sex role confusion marked by white men's increasingly over-civilized effeminacy and white women's increasingly selfish avoidance of wifely and motherly duties.[125] Yet an interview explaining how Anita Loos broke into motion picture work treated marriage and divorce in the lightest possible terms. "'I always wanted to see New

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[121] After marriage this was considered woman's role whatever she did, and how women from all classes tenaciously sought to preserve this marker, see Sheila Rothman, *Woman's Proper Place* (New York: Basic Books, 1978), 82-90.
[122] LPSB #4, "Gloria Swanson in Elinor Glyn Story," November 24, 1920.
[123] Statistic cited in Dorothy Schneider and Carl Schneider, *American Women in the Progressive Era* (New York: Facts on File, 1992), 146
[124] John D'Emilio and Estelle Freedman, *Intimate Matters* (New York: Harper& Row, 1988), 173-5. The authors note that the decline among the native born, urban middle class was particularly pronounced. By 1900s, two thirds of this group had no more than two children and 15% remained childless. On the birth control movement in this period and its earlier links to feminism, see Ellen Chesler, *Woman of Valor* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1992).
[125] See Gail Bederman, *Manliness and Civilization* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1995), 184-206.

York,'" Loos confided to Parsons.[126] "After the briefest sort of courtship" a man "'promised to take me to this wonder city…I married him to get my transportation. He only had money enough to get us as far as Omaha. On the third day I went out to get a hair net and I forgot to come back.'" Considering the baggage carried by the topic of divorce, and the industry's concerns with gentrifying its appeal, one might expect Parsons to have treated the topic of marriage with a bit of solemnity. Yet she declared Loos's "spirit of adventure" identified the five foot tall writer as "a wise little business woman."

Parsons's poking fun at the sanctity of marriage ended abruptly when a scandal involving the marriage of her friend Fannie Hurst hit the front pages of newspapers across the country in the first week of May 1920.[127] In an era when reading short stories and syndicated novels was virtually a national obsession, Hurst was touted as the country's "highest paid short story writer."[128] Hurst's work was everywhere: syndicated weekly in newspapers; published regularly in prestigious monthly magazines; and about to appear on the screen.[129] Appearing the day before the adaptation of her short story "Humoresque" premiered, the announcement that Hurst had secretly wed pianist Jaques Danielson five years earlier seems suspiciously timed.[130] What made the story controversial, however, was not so much the revelation of Hurst's secret marriage, but the

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[126] LPSB #3, "In and Out of Focus: Anita Loos, Who Looks Like a Movie Star and in Reality is the Brainy Young Woman Who Writes for Them," March 16, 1919.
[127] Eells, 51.
[128] Brooke Kroeger, *Fannie* (New York: Random House, 1999), 49. See also Grant Overton, *The Women Who Make Our Novels* (New York: Moffat, Yard, 1922); Grant Overton. *Fannie Hurst* (New York: Harper and Brothers, 1928).
[129] On Hurst's popularity in this period, see Kroeger, 28-53; Grant Overton, *The Women Who Make Our Novels* (New York: Dodd, Mead & Company, 1928), 180-6.
[130] The story broke on May 4, 1920 when an Associated Press reporter claimed to have accidentally discovered her marriage records. It was syndicated in every paper that I viewed.

statement that she gave to the press when approached for a confirmation. "LIVE APART, THEIR OWN WAY," a headline in *The New York Times* declared.[131] Like Gloria Swanson, Hurst admitted that Mr. Danielson had eroded "'a youthful determination that marriage was not for me.'" "'But my determination that marriage should never lessen my capacity for creative work or pull me down into a state of fat-mindedness was not undermined,'" she continued. In order to avoid such a condition—one she thought rendered "'nine out of ten [marriages]…merely sordid endurance tests''—Hurst detailed an arrangement that included separate apartments, meetings by appointment that resulted in "average of two breakfast a week," and a promise never to ask for an accounting of time mostly spent apart. Although Hurst admitted that the marriage "'was the result of very definite theories concerning wedlock,'" she took pains to emphasize that it "'was not the result of a fad…We believe in love but not Free Love. Rather we are willing to pay the price in mutual sacrifices toward the preservation of one another's individuality.'" Hurst reversed the idea that the rise in divorce derived from too much individualism, claiming instead that protecting each other's individuality preserved not just marriage, but romance as well. "'After a five-year acid test,'" she claimed, "'the dew is still on the rose.'" The description of a marital arrangement so far outside the bounds of what even those who considered themselves liberal progressives advocated drew attacks from press and pulpit.[132]

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[131] "Fannie Hurst Wed," *New York Times,* May 4, 1920, 1, 4. All quotes this paragraph, Ibid.

[132] On how most liberal minded activists during the Progressive era believed that divorce resulted from an excess of women's individualism, see Rosalind Rosenberg, *Beyond Separate Spheres*. New Haven: Yale University Press: 1982, 156-62.

Parsons kept silent on the topic as Hurst's metaphor was mockingly derided in editorials from coast to coast. The response duplicated the one she gave to the shocking news of Mary Pickford's 1920 quickie Nevada divorce from Owen Moore and remarriage to Douglas Fairbanks three weeks later.[133] Clearly the allegedly devout Catholic star had been breaking more than one commandment. In a premature report of the Fairbanks's separation published two years earlier, Parsons had quoted Mrs. Fairbanks's claim that she was no longer willing to act as "'a shield'" for her husband's affair with "'one of the world's most famous motion picture actresses.'"[134] But then Parsons dropped the story, even when the Fairbanks divorced later that year. Parsons also remained completely mum as the controversy over Pickford's divorce, immediate remarriage, and the Nevada Attorney General's threat to annul it and make the star a bigamist splashed across front pages and ate up inches of editorial comment in early 1920. Parsons failed to cover the story even when the celebratory crowds that sent Pickford and Fairbanks off on their honeymoon indicated that Mary's public did not begrudge America's Sweetheart an affair—as long as it resulted in a marriage to her UA partner and the swashbuckling prince of the new *American Aristocracy*.[135]

Parsons never directly touched the topic of Pickford's scandalous divorce and remarriage to Fairbanks, but she did cover the pair's return. The story made a point of noting how reporters' innumerable questions on the "the subject of how to be happily married" prompted Pickford "to reiterate over and over again that her idea of domestic

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[133] See for instance, "Part Time Marriage," *San Francisco Bulletin*, May 7, 1920, 6; "Husband Approves Fannie Hurst's Idea," *The New York Times*, May 5, 1920. LPSB #4, "Doug Fairbanks and Mary Pickford Here," June 2, 1920.
[134] LPSB #3, "Douglas Fairbanks Liberated For Love," April 11, 1918. The two divorced later that year and Beth Fairbanks remarried in 1919.
[135] *American Aristocracy* (Paramount 1916)

bliss was not founded on a Fannie Hurst two-breakfasts-a-week-cult but upon the very solid and old fashioned basis of seven a week."[136] The *New York Times*' coverage of Pickford's marriage made the point even more explicitly. "Here in New York Fannie Hurst, having consulted her engagement book and found the evening free mutters madly, 'What is the name of that man I married? I ought to have his telephone somewhere," while "Out in Hollywood California a little woman with golden hair puts the chops on and wonders with a sigh if her adorable fellow will be late."[137] The message was loud and clear: Pickford resorted to unconventional means only to achieve ends most conventionally defined.

A couple of months later, Parsons ran a story that for the first time explored the difficulties that women balancing marriage and work might confront and, again, the shadow of Hurst's experience lurked behind the coverage. An interview with Miriam Cooper found Parsons introducing the actress she described as a convent-bred Southerner as, "well qualified to say whether a woman's place is in the home or beside her husband in his work, having tried both roles, her conclusion is a woman's place is wherever she is needed most." The decision, Parson considered, was "not at variance with feminist principles."[138] Here, Parsons cast Cooper's work with her husband, director Raoul Walsh, explicitly as work *for* him, noting that Walsh had "convinced her that her screen

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[136] LPSB # 4, "In and Out of Focus: Mary Pickford," June 6, 1920.
[137] *The New York Times*, June 2, 1920, 9.
[138] LPSB #4, "In and Out of Focus: Miriam Cooper," July 25, 1920. All quotes in the paragraph, Ibid. Decades later, when discussing the trend of actresses marrying younger men, Parsons noted that "actresses, particularly the successful ones, are extraordinarily independent. Many of them manage their own financial affairs as competently as any businessman. It is not easy for an independent woman to bow to anyone other than herself as the head of the house. Younger men are far more tractable than older husbands." Parsons, *The Gay Illiterate*, 184.

persona was irreplaceable and necessary to his film" and that Cooper "was quick to say that 'he is still the star of the family.'" Any hint of professional autonomy—let alone the suggestion of a competition between them—had disappeared, replaced instead by the idea that feminism justified women's work with husband's permission. As if to make sure that readers got the point that working wives in Hollywood were capable of successfully enacting wedlock in all its traditional glory, Parsons closed the piece by noting that although her meeting with Cooper "took place before Fannie Hurst startled the world by advocating the personal liberty, separate establishment program," she was happy to report that "despite Miss Cooper's opposite views on how married life should be spent, the dew is still on the roses for the Walshes, and this after three years of married life."

The adjustment in how Parsons presented Hollywood's ladies attitudes toward the relationship between marriage and work may have stemmed from more than the two successive uproars on the topic. Considering the long standing association of actresses with unconventionality, if not simple immorality, and the central, much publicized, and often truly unconventional place they occupied in the early film business, she might also have been trying to prevent an attack on their private lives from eating away at other freedoms. In effect, Parsons's recasting of actresses as feminists who respected traditional arrangements in the domestic sphere protected their elevated status and the film industry's. That Parsons continued to offer positive stories on Hurst's work even as she described Pickford and Cooper's anti-Hurst matrimonial philosophy supports the idea that this may have been a deliberate strategy. The same day she covered Pickford's extended declamation of her differences from Hurst, Parsons delivered a glowing review

of *Humoresque*, offering the Hearst produced adaptation of Hurst's story her highest accolade: it "should silence some of the movies' critics."[139]

More significantly, Hurst showed up as nothing less than a symbol of inspiration for other women when Parsons publicized the goings-on of "The Woman Pays Club," a club whose formation she first featured under the headline "THE WOMAN PAYS."[140] Describing the members as "forty newspaper women and writers" who met weekly to lunch while honoring guest speakers like Anita Loos and novelist Edna Ferber, Parsons claimed the Club "was formed because these women never like the men to think they have anything to brag about." The Club reworked an old Victorian saw for its name—one used as a chapter title in Thomas Hardy's *Tess of the Dubervilles*—that referred to society's penchant for demanding that women pay for pleasures that men enjoyed with little risk. The name became a witty literary re-appropriation in the hands of women whose work involved defining the characters of others. Since Parsons's club was "patterned after the Dutch Treat Club," membership also signaled support of an idea ascribed to by some feminists that argued women would never be men's equals as long as they remained financially dependent upon them.

A story on the club's activities, headlined as "Earning Her Rights," elaborated this last point.[141] Parsons opened with a prologue that introduced a woman with heroic possibilities: "Time was when Janet Flanner was a hard working woman. She earned her

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[139] LPSB #4, June 6, 1920.
[140] LPSB #4, "The Woman Pays Club," April 18, 1920. All quotes this paragraph, Ibid. Parsons further explained "this feminist organization consists of artists, musicians, motion picture writers, authors, newspaper women and other professional members of the fair sex who believe in their independence and prove it by earning their living" in LPSB #6, "The Woman Pays Party," January 8, 1921.
[141] LPSB #4, "Earning Her Rights," May 20, 1920. And all quotes this paragraph, Ibid.

bread and ham as motion picture editor for the Indianapolis Star." But then Flanner found her prince, and "instead of pursuing the course of many of her married friends and continuing her career Miss Flanner became a typical clinging creature and allowed her husband to provide all the bread and jam." Although "Janet was content with her lot," she reported, "her friends found so much fault she knew if she wished to continue as a member of the Woman Pays Club she must bring in some money." Parsons now used Hurst's to illustrate her heroine's fall from grace. "When Fannie Hurst married and proudly proclaimed to the world that she had kept her personal liberty in tact by buying her own clothes and paying the grocer," she declared. Hurst's example helped Janet to realize that "if she ever expected to attend another meeting of the Woman Pays Club she must rectify her indolence and show the Club some money she earned. She wrote fast and furiously." Successfully imitating Hurst—minus the domestic details—put Flanner "back in the Club's good graces. 'We'll make her famous in spite of herself,' said one of her stern judges."

The production of motion pictures had coalesced on the Coast by the time Parsons reported on Flanner's May 1920 skirmish with The Woman Pays Club. Charting the westward tilt of the business left Parsons in a unique position to explain to her readers what heading west meant. In doing so, she returned to an idea most famously promoted by the newspaper man Horace Greeley. Like Greeley, Parsons wrote about the West from the East, as New York still held the reigns that financed and publicized production around Los Angeles. Greeley had built his paper into a national force by championing the idea that the frontier's cultivation would solve the problem of what to do with the

crowded East's surplus of men.[142] Now Parsons seized upon the motion picture industry as the West's new frontier, promoting its new home as a glorious resource from which the ambitious might wring their fortunes. But in Parsons's hands the pioneers were smoking, dressed to the nines, and drinking a highball while speeding across the country on the Twentieth Century Limited to recreate the meaning of feminine good fortune.

Parsons offered readers a clear view onto this new frontier in a column that "Every Girl Who Is Determined to Become a Picture Actress Should Read."[143] After seeing just one movie, Parsons reported, Dorothy Dalton quit her job as a leading player in a stock theatre and "took herself to California." "There was Dorothy Dalton, many miles from home," Parsons empathized, "with a good job in the past and nothing in the future. Most girls would have sat down and cried or begged on bended knee for something to keep the wolf from prowling around the door." But not this heroine. After suffering countless refusals for work, Dalton merely "gritted her teeth, clenched her hands and forced herself to smile...and said pleasantly, 'Very well, I shall come again tomorrow; perhaps something will unexpectedly develop.'" One contract in the business later, Parsons could offer Dalton's experience as a parable for what other women with determination, grit, and good grace might expect in this new West.

A piece on the imminent move from New York to Los Angeles of publicist-turned-scenarist Josephine Quirk explicitly resurrected Greeley's old advice for new ends. "When Horace Greeley penned those immortal words, 'Go West, Young Man,' he

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[142] Constance Rourke, *Trumpets of Jubilee* (New York: Harcourt, Brace & Co., 1927), 300-4.

[143] LPSB #2, 'Every Girl Who Is Determined to Become a Picture Actress Should Read This Story of Dorothy Dalton, Who Quit a Good Job, Bought a Ticket to the Coast and just Stuck Around and Smiled and SMILED Till She Got a Contract," February 10, 1918. All quotes this paragraph, Ibid.

failed to reckon with the feminine contingent. That of course was before the days of feminism," Parsons excused.[144] "In the good old days when Horace philosophized over the possibilities in the golden west he thought the only interest the fair sex could have in this faraway country was to go as a helpmate to man," she explained. Parsons spelled out just what such a role entailed: "If her husband, her father or her brother set out to explore the vast unknown—she should accompany him as cook, chief sewer of buttons and to make sure that his home was kept clean." Banishing the thought of consigning current readers to such an inglorious fate, Parsons declared, "But that was in the good old days. In the present day, if milady goes west she travels not to sew on buttons or do the family washing, she goeth to make her own fortune." Here, Parsons's history lesson revealed feminism's meaning unmistakably: feminism meant that women could travel to Hollywood as adventurers equally interested in, and capable of, seeking their own fortunes. Calling Quirk "one of those up to date young women who is following Greeley's advice," Parsons underscored how such a move was what any modern young woman should want to undertake. But Parsons's philosophizing about the trip west did this adventurer one better than those who had set off into Greeley's great unknown. No possible calamity faced Quirk: her "future is assured, since she has accepted a position with the Goldwyn Company."

And so the hopeful responded, travelling westward as before. During the decade following 1910, migration to Los Angeles peaked and the motion picture industry's lure helped to create the city's distinctive visage. The patterns of age and sex that marked urban development in the East and Midwest did not shape the development of Los

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[144] LPSB #4, "In and Out of Focus: Josephine Quirk; She Is Following Horace Greeley's Advice And Going West," November 21, 1920. All quotes this paragraph, Ibid.

Angeles.[145] Rather than developing a population thick with adult, single men—as boomtowns generally did—its gold rush attracted single women.[146] By 1920, an article on California's "rather appalling statistics" regarding divorce tied the problem directly to women's entrance into public life. "The recent trend of women to enter public life and the lessening ties of the home" were blamed for the problem, since most men procured divorces based on the grounds of desertion.[147] By the time that Parsons encouraged Quirk's imitators westward, then, Los Angeles had become a well publicized home to single women adventurers.

The figure of the out-to-work-woman-come-to-town-looking-for-adventure may have been exceptionally commonplace in Los Angeles but, as we have seen, millions of others nationwide took similar course. Increasingly, the movie industry and Hollywood's home on the West Coast became dramatic symbols of the ethos surrounding women's new place in public, an ethos that encouraged young women to imagine and to follow new models of feminine ambition and propriety. The place that women occupied within the industry offered female fans tangible evidence that women might succeed in areas, and on terms, previously reserved for men. And, yet, by continuing to celebrate the glamorous side long associated with feminine power, women workers in Hollywood shaped and sold a fan culture that acted as a sort of bridge from the past, in effect promising young women they could have it all.

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[145] Warren S. Thompson, *Growth and Changes in California's Population* (Los Angeles: The Haynes Foundation, 1955), 88.
[146] Ibid., 48-51, 89. SF's sex ratio in 1910 was 125.5 where as LA's was 105.8. Agricultural regions in the state displayed an even greater imbalance in the sex ratio. Interestingly, another peculiarity in the state as a whole was that its typically high sex ratio did not result in higher proportion of married women.
[147] "Steady Growth in California's Divorces Shown," *San Francisco Bulletin*, April, 21, 1920, 3.

Journalists like Parsons displayed how women in the film industry fantastically connected and embodied the two most influential environments that young women moved into in this period: the world of mass culture and the world of work. Fusing some of the most visible freedoms resulting from women's work with the new social conventions they engendered, women in the movie industry became—like Hollywood—real and iconic representations of the period's contested change. Actresses were by definition public personages, representing women's central place in a consumer culture in which they might put-on and take-off roles like the fashions and beauty products they helped to popularize.[148] In the process, actresses—and the other high profiled women who helped midwife the birth of Hollywood—figuratively came to stand in for the radically new ways that women might participate in public culture, a participation that Hollywood quite literally needed to fill the thousands of seats in the new theatres going-up in the largest cities and towns. Out west, women in the motion picture business turned Hollywood into a pervasive cultural symbol—or a test case if you will—about just how far women's emancipation could go.

[148] For a discussion of women's leadership in the cosmetic industry that describes a similar dynamic, see Kathy Peiss, *Hope in a Jar* (New York: Henry Holt, 1998).

Part II. Melodramas of Hollywood's Birth in 1921

Between 1920 and 1921 the idea of Hollywood as a glamorous new cosmopolitan social environment that symbolized a powerful new place, product, and an approach to life took root in the public's imagination. In an attempt to capture what this development meant to different audiences at the time, the second section of this dissertation explores three different narratives about how the phenomenon was publicized, contested, celebrated, and just plain hijacked by a host of individuals and groups interested in the possibilities of what Hollywood might do for them. The next three chapters, "Melodramas of Hope," "Melodramas of Passion," and "Melodramas of Crisis," express three distinct, yet ultimately intertwined narratives about the significance of Hollywood's birth—to resort to a tired metaphor. All three narratives employed a melodramatic mode of storytelling in different, though at times overlapping, ways. Such a fact suggests melodrama's overriding importance in the period as a means both to express the fictions of popular-cum-mass culture and to make sense of the facts of the world. It also serves as a cautionary note to scholars in search of unitary theories with which to comprehend the past, reminding us how those living through a period may process and make use of events unfolding around them in ways that are continuous and fragmented, connected and splintered, all at once.

Chapter 4.
Melodramas of Hope; Hollywood Hits the Big Time

Shortly after New Year's Day 1921, Louella Parsons heralded the trip west of another woman whose expenses were being paid by the Goldwyn Company: "Anzia Yezierska, whose volume of stories 'Hungry Hearts' has received such high praise from the critics and proves so popular with the reading public," had become "the latest addition to the Goldwyn forces."[1] Actually, Yezierska's first collection had met scant reviews and sluggish sales until the author visited Dr. Frank Crane. Determined to wrest attention for her work from the world—attention she believed her editor at Houghton Mifflin incapable of generating—Yezierska visited Crane unannounced in December 1920, poured out her struggles to become an author and pleaded with him to read her book.[2]

Yezierska had selected her target well. A Protestant minister with social gospel credentials that signaled a liberal interest in the so-called "immigrant question," Crane's opinions on literary and political events reached a broad slice of American readers.[3] Crane acted as the editorial voice of Current Opinion, a current event monthly geared toward the middle class, and authored a column syndicated in Hearst's newspapers, papers that had risen through the support earned by their crusades on behalf of the

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[1] Louella Parsons Scrapbook #5, Joins Goldwyn Forces," nd., Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Science, Los Angeles (hereafter LPSB).
[2] Louise Levitas Henriksen, *Anzia Yezierska* (New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 1988), 148. Yezierska wrote repeatedly to her editor at Houghton Mifflin asking for more publicity, but he responded that short story collections were a kind of literary labor of love and very difficult to turn into money makers. (Ibid, 132-3, 141, 153-5)
[3] Crane co-edited *Current Opinion* from 1920-25. He thought some immigration restrictions were necessary, but his editorials in *Current Opinion* consistently mocked hysterical descriptions of the threat. He also criticized considering "new immigrants" inferior to "old stock" ones. See in *Current Opinion* (January 1921) "The Man With a Pack on His Back," 13-4; "America First," 15-6; "Immigration," 20-1.

immigrant working class.[4] Weeks after her visit, an entire column appeared on the front page of perhaps hundreds of papers—those owned by Hearst and others that merely used his syndication service—headlined under her misspelled name. "I got a new slant on America from Anzia Yezyierska" Crane began, lavishing the author and Hungry Hearts with praise worthy of a star. To Crane, the "East Side Jewess" was more than "a genius," and "more than queen," she was simply, "a Thoroughbred. Let no man or woman dare to speak or write on immigration that has not read 'Hungry Hearts.' I have laughed and cried over it, and I lay it down a bit awed, as if I had seen an alien people's naked soul."[5]

However overblown Crane's purple prose may sound today, his language was typical of melodramatic rhetoric employed in much popular writing that shamelessly sought to offer readers entrée into stories outside the confines of ordinary life. Recording Yezierska's "unquenchable hope" and "inviolable belief" that she was "God's stenographer," Crane's portrait ended with her triumph over insurmountable odds: "From sweatshop worker to famous writer! All because she dipped her pen in her heart."[6] The conventions and emotional register of melodrama shaped a press story that many were eager to share, as Crane rendered in broad strokes the ambitions of this poor, immigrant Jewish woman, improbably, victorious.[7] A mere month later Yezierska was bound for

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[4] On how Hearst pioneered the strategy at his first paper in San Francisco, see David Nasaw, *The Chief* (New York: Houghton Mifflin, 2000), 67-81. Hearst' association with immigrants is also noted by John Higham, *Strangers in the Land* (New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 1994), 127-8; Daniel T. Rodgers, *Atlantic Crossings* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1998), 136-7, 147-8.

[5] Frank Crane quoted in Henriksen, 149. The author estimates that 300 papers reprinted the column.

[6] Ibid., 149.

[7] My own understanding of melodrama as a cultural form in the nineteenth century owes the most to Robertson Davies, *The Mirror of Nature* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1983). I am also indebted to the thorough research into melodrama's theatrical

Los Angeles with $10,000 banked for the sale of the picture rights to Hungry Hearts. Crane's casting of Yezierska as the heroine in his own heartfelt column had, indeed, worked a kind of magic.

Both the particular shape of Yezierska's promotion and Goldywn's decision to produce Hungry Hearts pointed to the important role that melodrama played in the development of early Hollywood. Many of the industry's most successful personalities and feature-length "special" films employed a melodramatic mode focused on the happily-ever-after adventures of willful young women. The use of this revamped, evolving melodramatic vernacular—by stars like Mary Pickford and Pearl White, industry publicists like Louella Parsons and at the Goldwyn Company, and writers like Yezierska—helped to account for the industry's increasing popularity among a cross class audience of women who were practiced consumers of its past literary and theatrical equivalents. It also fed the industry's explosive growth in the years immediately following the Great War. By 1921, the proliferation of theaters devoted only to showing movies—especially the lavish picture palaces that had come to adorn the thoroughfares of cities and towns—offered tangible evidence of the industry's gentrification and prosperity. Yet this new found visibility and expansion also generated controversies both within and outside the industry. The large scale construction and refurbishment of theaters over the course of 1920 was about more than simple demand. It also signaled the emergence of a monopolistic industrial structure built around controlling movie screens; the development pitted the largest producers against thousands of independent exhibitors

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expressions found in, Faye Dudden, *Women in the American Theatre, Actresses and Audiences* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1994). Clearly, I do not agree with Dudden's declension thesis regarding women's place within, and relationship to, the theater.

across the country. The popularity of feature length melodramas shown on these screens was also a phenomenon that cut two ways, helping to nourish a drive to regulate the film industry that had picked up unprecedented strength by 1921. Still, as Yezierska traded New York's January grey for Los Angeles's winter sunshine, many fans and industry insiders had every reason to hope about the promising developments out west.

Faith in the principle of poetic justice and the possibility of near magical transformation in the lives of ordinary people may link melodrama to some of the oldest tales told. Melodrama's roots share, some critics contend, a rich soil with the kind of story-telling that flourished in fairy tales, ballads, and theatrical performances, stories that many knew before ever seeing a book. Whatever its origins, over the course of the nineteenth century the spread of literacy, cheaper reproduction methods, and theatrical exchanges put a commercial culture of print and performance dominated by melodramatic expression before a steadily increasing number.[8] By 1900, melodrama had

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[8] On changes in printing, see Helmutt Lehmann-Haupt et al., *The Book in America* (New York: Bowker, 1952). On dime novels, see Michael Denning, *Mechanic Accents* (London: Verso Press, 1998, rev. ed). On domestic novels, see Nina Baym, *Women's Fiction* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1978). Baym focuses on how novel reading and writing by mid-century was considered a female activity with books sharing the "overplot" of a heroine's trails to establish an adult feminine ego. On theater's spread and melodrama's influence see, Dudden, 6-7, 57, 60-2, 67, 70-4; Bruce McConachie, *Melodramatic Formations, American Theatre and Society, 1820-1870* (Iowa City: University of Iowa Press, 1992). On the "penny press" see, James L. Crouthamel, *Bennett's New York Herald and the Rise of the Popular Press* (Syracuse: Syracuse University Press, 1989), 20-5. For a good definition of sensationalism in the press, see George Juergens, *Joseph Pulitzer and the New York World,* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1960), viii-ix. His discussion does not use the term melodrama, but the emphasis on personality driven stories stretched out to convey suspense and treachery, spectacular stunts, and a crusading editorial stance championing the common man seems to fit. Nasaw notes a similar strategy in Hearst's papers, 95-125. Part of the difficulty in discussing melodrama's development in the U.S. is that the histories of the press, theatre, and popular fiction speak very little to each other, though their developments were deeply intertextual. Denning suggests this reality in chap. 10. It seems to me that melodramatic

come to shape much of America's letters: feature news stories and short stories in the popular press; the so-called domestic novels written by and for women of the burgeoning middle class; dime-novels devoured by working class youths; plays performed on the legitimate stage, in ethnic urban theatres, and by the "ten-twenty-thirty" companies that toured small cities and towns.[9]

The melodramatic mode was at once profoundly populist and romantically personalized, a plasticity particularly suited to the American grain—and to motion pictures.[10] Though varying widely in terms of setting and action, melodrama relied on a plot structured around the hero or heroine's triumph over villainy, dished out with strong

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plays and literature may have shaped the popular press, which in turn shaped these and popular speech. Robert Park suggests this relationship in, "The Natural History of the Newspaper," in Park, Ernest Burgess, and Roderick McKenzie, *The City* (Chicago University Press, 1925), 94-5.

[9] These are the plays variously labeled apocalyptic, domestic, trick, heroic, nautical, horse, sensational, problem, moral, and immoral discussed in McConachie. On the "ten-twenty-thirty," see Richard Butsch, The Making of American Audiences (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000), chap. 9; Ben Singer, *Melodrama and Modernity* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2001), chap. 6.

[10] My use here of the word "personalized" rather than individual is strategic. The privileging of possessive individualism, a characteristic of the middle class that views social status as purely a function of individual effort and qualities, has been noted by many historians including, Stuart Blumin, *The Emergence of the Middle Class* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989). Following Janice A. Radway, *A Feeling for Books* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1997), 282-6, 484. I employ the concept of "personalism" instead of individualism to stress a different aspect of what melodramatic plots in movies may have offered to the widening circle of their female fans. Radway uses personalism to emphasize the affective, emotional, and empathetic aspects of individualism, rather than viewing it as a purely economic and highly intellectualized concept. She stresses how books provided "a sense of absorption and connection" so that readers might experience "something with greater force of fervor than one might be permitted in ordinary daily life." This makes personalism a process that cultivates "a more social habit of mind than other forms of individualism" perhaps working to counter "the singularity of individuals and to meliorate their separation from one another by insisting always on their capacity for identification" while "the emphasis on intensified passion and pathos counteracted the excessive rationalism and distance of the instrumental, utilitarian approach to life."

emotion, and leavened with comedic touches. As a broad rhetorical form common to much of the popular vernacular, it offered an impassioned register for a protagonist to seek redress that elevated the seemingly average speaker. Melodrama often expressed the more modern dilemma of each individual's internal unrest, of each man or woman's desire to view themselves as a subject worthy of a romance promising that everything would turn out for the best by The End. Displacing the figure of the elite man as central patron and protagonist, melodrama appealed to the "poor working man and his female counterpart, or bourgeois citizen toiling to keep his place in a hurrying world," encouraging their identification "with the Hero, the Heroine, or the Villain," according to novelist and dramatist Robertson Davies.[11] Melodramas enticed the participation of its audiences with skillfully executed, over-the-top spectacles or speech that inspired passionate attachment to its protagonists. Its heart-stopping aesthetic sought to engender a strong emotional response that might bridge the distance separating spectators or readers from each other. Paradoxically, it proffered a means to celebrate individualism and an antidote to its isolating effects, offering the movies' growing circle of female fans a chance to join together to laugh and cry and swoon over the triumphs and tragedies of an adventurous woman determined to make her way in the world.[12]

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[11] Davies, 22-6. The author notes that simple, direct speech was an "upper class, educated-class affair" which left most in the 19C in search of means to learn "as much rhetoric as he could command."

[12] Because historians like Butsch and Singer seek to remind today's students that melodramas were commonly understood as "blood and thunder" action-adventures they overemphasize this aspect. For instance, while Butsch notes that women in the legitimate theatre audience were severely criticized by the press for their "taste for romantic melodrama" he goes on to describe the "melodrammer audiences" without them, 123, 129-157. Similarly, Singer notes a critic's comment that melodrama had moved "'indoors'" to become "'effeminate, maidenly'" and then discusses melodrama only as "blood and thunder," see, 166-88. My point is that action and romance were not mutually

This helps to explain Yezierska's stories and her promotion—as well as the effects that both produced. Crane's casting of Yezierska as the heroine in a melodramatic narrative placed her within a familiar formula. The role sold the melodramatic stories contained in Hungry Hearts and convinced Goldwyn that Yezierska's writing and persona were ripe for Hollywood-style treatment and attention. These two events, in turn, produced a spectacular turn of events in Yezierska's own life. Within a month of the column's appearance, the struggling writer who had to scrape together the money to return Goldywn's long distance phone calls was a wealthy woman heading for the Coast to join the ranks of the other highly publicized, best-selling "Eminent Authors" Goldwyn employed in Hollywood.[13] The Goldwyn Company's publicist took Crane's casting one step further. Press releases heralding this "sweatshop Cinderella['s]" arrival among the orange groves drew reporters downtown to meet Yezierska's train at Los Angeles's new mission-style-meets-art-nouveau station.[14] The power of melodrama was such that it could transform a college educated, twice divorced, forty year-old Jewish immigrant

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exclusive, and especially after *Camille*'s success at mid-century, melodramas moved toward concentrating on the fallen woman and her relationship to society, a genre that especially fit feminine tastes.

[13] On this promotion, see A. Scott Berg, *Goldwyn* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1989), 91-7. The author considers Goldwyn's creation of Eminent Authors an attempt to use well known writers like Gertrude Atherton, Rex Beach, Robert Hughes, and Mary Roberts Rinehardt to compete with more successful companies that employed big stars like Famous Players-Lasky. On Yzierska's claim that she pawned her mother's Sabbath shawl to call Goldwyn, see Anzia Yezierska, Blanche Gelfant, ed., *Hungry Hearts* (New York: Penguin Books, 1997, rpt. 1920), vii. Her story may have been melodramatic excess, but she was living in one room tenement and had only earned $200 from Houghton Mifflin when Goldwyn offered $10,000 and $200 a week for expenses and living in a one room tenement until signing Goldwyn's contract. See Henriksen, 128, 142, 152.

[14] Henriksen, 157; "New Author at Goldwyn's," *Los Angeles Times*, January 25, 1921, pt. III, p., 4.

socialist with a small daughter residing with her ex-husband in the Bronx into the very saleable and fair-haired ingénue of classic fairy tale fame.[15]

That Yezierska had set the stage for this presentation, glossing over just such details in favor of a tale that proved irresistible to her readers and to Crane, pointed to how women used melodrama's emotion and adventure-rich tropes to imagine new opportunities for their sex.[16] Yezierska favored a press projection that stressed the autobiographical elements of her writing, merging her own past with the fresh-off-the-boat women in her stories. This allowed her to elide the three decades already spent in the United States in favor of representing, and of tapping the interest in, the more romantic immediacy of immigrant newcomers hungry to transform themselves in America. "Like all people who have nothing, I lived on dreams. With nothing but my longing for love, I burned my way through stone walls till I got to America," declares a heroine in a story entitled, "The Miracle."[17] "'Don't take pity on my years,'" another character declares, "'I am living in America, not Russia. I'm not hanging on anybody's neck to support me. In America, if a girl earns her living, she can be fifty years old and without a man, and nobody pities her.'"[18] To achieve their dreams, her heroines must do more than escape shop bosses who would sweat their lives away and the charity of elite women eager to help the "deserving" along the road toward a menial job. The path that Yezierska's protagonists must trod to become heroines demands they also reject the customs of centuries: fathers who direct daughters' labors to support their own

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[15] As can best be determined, Yezieska was born in Russian Poland between 1880 and 1883, Gelfant, xi.
[16] On Yezierska's self presentation to *Good Housekeeping*, retooling her past for her author's biography, and the story told to Crane see Henriksen, 128-30,142-3, 148.
[17] Anzia Yezierska in Gelfant, ed., "The Miracle, 72.
[18] Ibid, "Wings," 13.

intellectual pursuits, matchmakers whose cold calculus measures a woman's worth by the size of her dowry or her biceps, and kindly Jewish suitors who assume financial security means more than true love. Despite the loneliness and deprivation suffered by her characters in the New World, Yezierska's America—and the melodramatic narratives she places them within—offers her ravenous heroines the chance to satisfy "'…the hunger to make from myself a person that can't be crushed by nothing nor nobody—the life higher!'"[19] Yezierska-as-Immigrant-Cinderella, and the characters she created, was decidedly not an innocent ingénue waiting to be rescued by a prince.

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By the time Yezierska traveled to Hollywood in 1921, motion pictures were widely held to have absorbed not only the melodramatic mode, but much of the theatrical stage itself. "The movie seems to be developing an appetite that will not be content until it has swallowed the whole theater industry," observed The Literary Digest, an influential news weeks aimed the middle class, about the trend.[20] This impression signaled an important change in the industry's visibility, place in popular culture, and standing among the middle class. The triumph of the revised melodramatic aesthetic also coincided with a new industrial structure, one that in many minds would quickly become indistinguishable from Hollywood itself. Because the two developments would prove to have important implications for each other, and for the rest of this story, we will take a

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[19] Ibid, "Hunger," 42

[20] "Fears of the All-Devouring Movie," *The Literary Digest* (March, 20, 1920): 40-1. On how *The Literary Digest*'s influence peaked in the early twenties, see Frank Luther Mott, *A History of American Magazines, vol. V* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1968), 296.

detour along the road of the industrial history of American motion pictures before returning to Yezierska.

The movies' consumption of the theater was partially explained by its superior ability at offering audiences the spectacular aspects of melodrama—and for less than stage performances could.[21] Attention to production values—the use of technology and dollars to display sumptuous settings and special effects on screen—distinguished Hollywood's product from the start. Playwright George Bernard Shaw, a movie fan whom Goldwyn also approached to join his "Eminent Authors," spoke from personal experience when he declared in 1915 that the film "reduces the would-be deceptive realistic scenery of the spoken drama to absurdity."[22] Shaw's observation was actually a bit late. By 1910, the nickelodeon boom had virtually obliterated the cheapest theaters specializing in melodramas, the "Ten-Twenty-Thirty."[23] By the time Shaw wrote the film industry's new special features had also begun to usurp playhouses that had once been reserved for the legitimate stage.[24]

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[21] For the first to argue that movie melodramas obliterated their stage counterparts because of their superior ability to satisfy the demand for greater pictorial realism in the theatre, see A Nicholas Vardac, *Stage to Screen* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1949). Singer expands on this view, with two important qualifications. Film melodramas were also a more economical choice for audiences, theatre managers, and producers, 167-8. Singer also notes that Vardac may have been overly reductive to claim that theatre was merely an aesthetically primitive, "debased proto-cinema," since theatrical melodramas, set under lights, leavened with comedy, and staged in an interactive forum offered fans a type of overt theatricality with pleasures of its own, 177-88.

[22] George Bernard Shaw, "What Films May Do to the Drama," *Metropolitan Magazine* (May 1915): 23. On Goldwyn approaching Shaw, who called himself a "picture enthusiast," see Berg, 97.

[23] On the decline of the "Ten-Twenty-Thirty," see Singer, 149-50; David Nasaw, *Going Out* (New York: Basic Books, 1993), 36-40.

[24] "Fears of the All-Devouring Movie," *The Literary Digest*, 40-1.

By 1920, many of the nation's most impressive theatrical venues were dedicated to the display of motion pictures. That year federal statistics demonstrated that work on picture theaters accounted for one in every forty dollars spent in the construction industry.[25] Again, big city exhibitors and their audiences had pointed the way toward the shape of things to come. The Strand in New York had inaugurated the move toward constructing the movie-theater-as-picture-palace, opening in April 1914 on no less than the stage's most prestigious address: the Great White Way. "If anyone had told me two years ago that the time would come when the finest looking people in town would be going to the biggest and newest theater on Broadway for the purpose of seeing a motion picture," reported a mystified theatre critic at the New York Times, "I would have sent them down…to the doctor [that] runs the city's bughouse."[26] For sheer grandeur, picture palaces trumped those that came before, adding imposing facades and vast lobbies to hold the crowds that owners hoped would be eagerly waiting to see the next show. They trounced their predecessors in size as well. Where once the grandest stage theater held 600 to 1,000 patrons, now the average movie palace accommodated 1,800 to 3,000—and sometimes double or triple that number.[27] Ticket prices that reached fifty cents and longer releases meant previously unimaginable numbers could attend. Consequently, picture palaces—and their urban audiences—quickly generated the bulk of the industry's

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[25] For a discussion of the report, see Edward Clifford, "1921," *Exhibitors Herald* (December 24, 1921): 68.
[26] Victor Watson, quoted in Richard Koszarski, *An Evening's Entertainment* (Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1990), 20.
[27] Benjamin Hampton, *A History of the American Film Industry* (Toronto: Dover Publications, 1970, rpt, 1931), 172-3, 204-5. For a 1919 survey prepared for the investment firm Kuhn, Loeb & Co. that supports Hampton's statistics regarding the financial troubles smaller houses met in the postwar period, see Koszarski, 12-3.

profits.[28] Distributors designated these houses as "first-run" in an elaborate system that classified every theater in the United States. In order to lengthen a movie's run and clear the best returns, distributors first released films in first-run theatres to exclusive, limited engagements.[29] Premieres at first-run houses produced a fanfare and anticipation that created more lucrative returns, and higher rentals, when a film traveled to second-run, third-run, and so on, theatres down the line.[30] Within a few short years, large, higher priced metropolitan houses generated nearly 70% of the domestic box-office.[31]

By 1921, such developments catapulted motion pictures into the nation's preeminent form of commercial entertainment. "The evolution of picture production, from a giant weed-like industry, crude and unformed, into an art has been one of the amazing revelations of the past five years," a reporter marveled that year.[32] Sold weekly to an estimated fifty million people—half the population of the United States—the movies had begun its thirty year reign as the nation's most popular amusement.[33] In our own multi-media saturated, heavily market segmented age it is difficult to imagine not only how new and quickly this appeared to have happened, but the degree to which the industry's most high profile products and personalities created one of the first national

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[28] Hampton, 204.
[29] On this system that became known as "clearance," see Richard Maltby and Ian Craven, *Hollywood Cinema* (Oxford: Blackwell Publishers, Inc., 1995), 66; Robert Sklar, *Movie-Made America* (New York: Random House, 1976), 144-5.
[30] Hampton, 173.
[31] Maltby and Craven, 63.
[32] Dwinelle Benthall, "Movie Influence," *Los Angeles Times's Illustrated Magazine*, January 2, 1921, 17.
[33] The best source for statistics on the film industry are the annuals *Wid's Year Book*, or *Film Yearbook* after 1922 (New York: Jack Alicoate). This was an estimate based on all taxes paid on amusements. For estimates that place attendance at 50 million weekly see, *Wid's Year Book 1921*; Pettijohn, 20; for 18,000,000 daily see, *Current Opinion* (May 1921): 652. See also Joel Finler, *The Hollywood Story* (London: Octopus Books, 1988).

media currencies.[34] "Time was when only lowbrows were supposed to attend the movies," observed The Literary Digest, "but to-day everybody frankly attends, high and low alike. We are told that the cinema now purveys amusement in America to more than 12,000,000 patrons daily."[35] Added to the reiteration that motion pictures had become America's fourth or fifth largest industry, such talk by journalists writing outside the sensational dailies or industry press communicated the sense of stumbling upon a completely finished colossus in one's neighborhood—the construction of which had gone unnoticed and unapproved by the proper authorities.[36]

Such facts and figures meant that members of the middle class had come to occupy more of the seats in movies theaters. Perhaps this accounted for the positive stories about the industry that mass market, middle brow publications ran in the years immediately following the war.[37] Reports found in the more self-consciously intellectual venues reflected the movies' rapidly changing fortunes too. "Let me begin by saying I am not a movie fan," announced a writer in the Atlantic Monthly. "Most of my friends honestly dislike them. But now and then I find one, equally intelligent, equally educated

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[34] On how movies became an increasingly minority activity post 1950, see Maltby and Craven, 10, 66-8.

[35] "A Movie of the Movie Fan at the Movies," *The Literary Digest* (February 26, 1921): 47. See also, Bailey Millard, "The Photoplay Has Come to Stay," *San Francisco Chronicle*, March 27, 1921, 3.

[36] For the Mayor of New York's declaration of "fourth," see *Exhibitors Herald* (October 22, 1921): 41; for "fifth," see "The 'Movie' As an Industry," *The Literary* Digest (October 6, 1917): 55. Recent work suggests this claim was inflated to hasten Wall Street bankers' investment, Koszarski, 91-4. Yet attempts to determine its industrial rank have estimated it as 5th, when capital investment in theatres and the American industry's virtual domination of European markets are included. None consider it less than 10th. For real estate see, Maltby and Craven, 60; for European exhibition, see Ruth Vasey, *The World According to Hollywood* (Madison: University of Wisconsin, 1997), 14-15.

[37] For the period between 1910 and 1929, more articles were published on "Moving Pictures and Morals" in 1920 and 1921 than any other two years before or after, see *The Readers' Guide to Periodical Literature* (Minneapolis: H.W. Wilson Co.).

who attends regularly."[38] The admission demonstrated the critical—and physical—distance separating the author from the subject, rendering her musings about who attended necessarily vague. The stance was typical among high-brow critics, according to Alice Durer Miller, a best-selling novelist whose books had been adapted into several films. To Miller, the fact that "'the people who go to the movies don't criticise [sic] them, and the people who criticise the movies don't go to them'" left critics and fans speaking in different tongues.[39]

Critics' certainty about the tastes of fans justified the perception that the audience for movies had assumed a feminized shape. For despite their admitted dearth of first hand experience, many journalists remained steadfast about what fans watched: romantic, thrill driven, tawdry melodramas, in which "the inevitable idealization of the heroine" was the most important ingredient.[40] As The Nation declared, "The popular film 'drama of heart interest' is the lineal descendant of the cheap melodrama of a dozen years ago, and it is the contemporary relative of the fiction of our popular magazines."[41] The critique offered by the Nation's editor suggested the enormous and largely female, market this heritage tapped. The New Republic made a similar connection between the art and audience of popular fiction and film, calling the "fundamental canon in contemporary fiction-making" one that linked the "facile romancers" of "our innocent

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[38] Katherine Fullerton Gerould, "Movies," *The Atlantic Monthly* (July 1921): 22-30.
[39] Alice Durer Miller, quoted in Robert E. Sherwood, *The Best Moving Pictures of 1922-23* (Boston: Small, Manard & Company, 1923), vi. Sherwood was the motion picture editor for *The New York Herald* and *Life* and one of the first serious movie critics.
[40] "Movie Morals," *The New Republic* (August 25, 1917): 100-1. See also Carl Van Doren, *Contemporary American Novelists, 1900-1920* (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1922), 13-17.
[41] "Morals and the Movies," *The Nation* (April 21, 1921): 581.

American fiction" to that "most popular art form" found in "the picture theatre."[42] "The morals of the movies are also the morals of the popular magazine," the piece continued, citing the misspelled "Fanny Hurst" as the preeminent example of an author whose work succeeded in both mediums by writing stories that largely appealed to the ladies. The author's judgment about Hurst proved prescient. An adaptation of Hurst's short story "Humoresque" would win the first equivalent of an academy award in 1921: Photoplay's gold Medal of Honor.[43] The fact that Photoplay's readers were mostly women again supported the notion that Hurst's melodramatics attracted and pleased female fans.[44]

A survey conducted by First National, the distribution company representing the largest number of exhibitors, spotlighted the important position that female personalities occupied in melodramatic films. In order to discover audiences' preferences First National conducted a massive survey of 10, 267 theatres located in "6,511 cities, town, and villages, ranging from the big cities to lumber camps."[45] It is impossible to glean individual responses from the results published in October 1920. But the summary reported "the average" feature film that drew motion picture fans on "any single day in the year" was overwhelmingly likely to focus on a "female star" performing in "a light

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[42] "Movie Morals," *The New Republic*, 100-1.

[43] See "Announcing the Photoplay Magazine Medal of Honor," *Photoplay* (June 1921): 29. Hearst produced the film and his papers crowed about its success, saying its theme of the "universality of mother-love" was one "wept over and applauded by nearly everyone in the world," see "'Humoresque' Wins Medal as 1920 Prize Film," *Chicago Herald and Examiner*, October 30, 1921, pt V, p 9.

[44] For a description of how Photoplay's editor James Quirk shifted the magazine between 1910 and 1916 from one aimed at men to women by redesigning its focus from a technical magazine aimed at camera hobbyists and would-be writers to one that emphasized stories about stars, the social culture of those in the industry, see Kathryn Fuller, *At the Picture Show* (Washington: Smithsonian Institution Press, 1996), 135, 145.

[45] "First National Completes Interesting Survey," *Wid's Daily*, October, 18, 1920, 1. Total estimate of theatres showing only movies usually hovered at around 15,000.

comedy of society life," "an emotional drama," "a drama notable for action," or "a drama of middle class life."[46] In addition to this indication of audiences' attraction to the theatrics of female stars, many of the films that attracted the most attention from the public in the years immediately following the war displayed female stars in films that continued to press the boundaries of the revamped melodramatic aesthetic. As we will see more later, these films encouraged the loyalty of a huge swath of female fans by encouraging their identification with the ever more risqué exploits of willful heroines and a new breed of glamorous, exotic Hollywood stars.

Such trends served to boost the industry's prominence and to build the number of its patrons which, in turn, amplified concerns about the spread of "movie morals" among its expanding circle of fans. Critics in the high brow press typically articulated the movies' moral problem on artistic grounds: the problem with the movies was that they revivified a debased artistic tradition whose only truthful element was special effects. "The crime against art is the real crime of the movies," asserted The Nation, asking, "Can censorship touch this?"[47] The industry's reference annual, Wid's Yearbook 1920, demonstrated that growing numbers had a different opinion about censorship's place in addressing the problem.[48] In an easily missed summary on the subject, Wid's noted that "Censorship battles in at least 36 states will be fought during the winter of 1921,"

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[46] Ibid. Combined percentage specifying "female stars" totaled 43.8%; specifying men, 6.01%, specifying "all-star," 19.39%. Other categories that did not mention stars included: 2 reel short slapstick, 9.9%; a rural comedy drama, 7.98%; feature length slapstick, 6.25%; adaptations of comedy stage successes, 6.01%; a 'stunt' comedy of feature length, 5.4%.

[47] "Morals and the Movies," *The Nation* (April 21, 1921): 581.

[48] *Wid's Year Book 1920* (New York and Hollywood: Wid's Films and Film Folks, Inc.), 333-3. The summary took up only two of the volumes more than five-hundred pages.

observing this was "more legislative battles than have been handled in any one time."[49] This made censorship "one of the most serious problems facing the industry" Wid's reported, continuing "it would not be surprising if during the coming winter the Congress in Washington did not take up the question" of federal regulation of the motion picture industry. Yet a symposium, entitled "What of the Coming Year?" betrayed no evidence of the trouble.[50] After consulting dozens of industry executives on their views about the future, Wid's declared "Optimism—the keynote" for 1921.

Just one man contradicted the rosy prognostications offered about the upcoming year. "Watch Your Step," warned Charles Pettijohn, a lawyer who worked for producer Lewis Selznick.[51] A latecomer to the business Pettijohn was the only symposium participant whose expertise ran more toward external, rather than internal, politics. The former secretary of the Democratic Party in Indiana, and the state boss's aide-de-camp, Pettijohn joined Selznick's production company in 1918.[52] "In my humble opinion the picture business had better watch its step during the coming year," observed the Midwestern native with characteristically folksy force.[53] "Censorship will be at the high water mark between November 1920 and June 1921" he reminded his colleagues. The industry "will be defeated in several states unless we get busy and equip ourselves to

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[49] Ibid., 333. The *Year Book* listed where actions stood in struggles taking place at the state level, including NY, KY, MA, MO, OR, SC, VA, ID, WI, OH, and PA, 333-5. State censorship boards existed in MD, PA, OH, and KA and in an uncounted number of cities.

[50] Ibid., 217-225. Few directors or writers, and no actors, participated in the symposium and the others discussed. Two women were interviewed: director Lois Weber and FPL scenarist Eve Unsell. Only three men offered predictions that were less than glowing.

[51] Ibid., 225.

[52] On Pettijohn's career in Indiana, see Ramsaye, 810-11. Lewis Selznick hired Pettijohn as general consul and to find theaters for Selznick-Republic's movies, Hampton, 247

[53] *Wid's Year Book 1920*, 225.

meet the situation. This cannot be done without a mutual understanding and a working arrangement with a national exhibitors' organization."

No matter how high the stakes, most readers of Wid's knew that cooperative action between the branches of production and exhibition would be difficult to engineer. The industry's intensely competitive atmosphere crested in the postwar period. Even as the shape of a new industrial oligopoly loomed, independent production still flourished and the runs of films lengthened.[54] Consequently, more movies were released then could be displayed in first-run picture palaces like the Strand. Access to approximately two hundred first-run theaters, out of some 14,000 houses, grew to determine the profit margin on increasingly expensive feature films. Those with the resources went on purchasing sprees particularly focused on acquiring the most lucrative, first-run screens in the largest urban centers. Here lay a new means to control the industry that also promised to reign in the power of individual stars. Wid's, the trade paper offering the most balanced reporting on all of the industry's still theoretically separate branches, opened its "Outlook and Resume" with "the prediction…that during the coming year the exhibiting end of the business will probably be composed of three or at most four distinct chains extending from coast to coast."[55]

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[54] J. Dannenberg, editor of *Wid's*, also indicated the lack of concern about a producing monopoly in "Outlook and Resume," writing "independent production promises to be stronger than ever," 64D. For a source that estimates that 40 to 60 producers were turning out twelve to fifteen hundred pictures a year by 1919 that sought distribution in the less than two hundred first run houses out of 14,000 theaters see, Hampton, 172-3. One industry source claimed 17,824 houses by mid-1921 devoted solely to motion pictures, "Morosco Places Theatre Total at 20,000 by 1922," *Exhibitors Herald* (October 1, 1921): 46.

[55] "Outlook and Resume," *Wid's Year Book 1920*, 64D.

To thousands of independent exhibitors, the leading villain could not have been easier to identify if he had dressed all in black: Adolph Zukor, president of Famous Players-Lasky /Paramount (FPL), the company that made and distributed the largest number of "special features." Spurred on by his rivalry with First National, Zukor decided the time had come to combine the branches of distribution and exhibition with production.[56] First, FPL obtained a controlling interest in key first-run picture palaces in Los Angeles and New York.[57] Then Zukor acquired footholds in corporations that controlled important theatre chains, acquiring their screens and franchises in First National.[58] Finally, Zukor used the resources he derived from the sale of FPL preferred stock to go on a building and buying theatre spree in even the remotest regions.[59] Between 1919 and 1921—when the Federal Trade Commission began an investigation of Zukor for these activities—his emissaries amassed a decisive interest in several hundred theaters where owners refused to sign agreements promising preferential treatment for FPL/Paramount's product.[60]

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[56] Fox was actually the first to do this, but the small scale of his operation attracted almost no attention.

[57] Koszarski, 75. These were Grauman's Million Dollar Theatre in LA and NY's Rialto and Rivoli purchased in April and May, 1919.

[58] Hampton., 254-9. In addition to the purchase of interests in the Black-Gray-Gordon corporations, Hampton notes that Zukor bought into the Stanley Company and The Saenger Amusement Company. All three corporations belonged to First National, allowing Zukor an inside track on their methods and plans.

[59] On how Zukor's unusual line into Wall St. capital, namely the 10 million dollars worth of preferred stock that Kuhn, Loeb & Company issued and sold, was a crucial part of his success, see Sklar, 146. The fact that Black had attempted, and failed, to attract backing to take his New England strategies national may account for his willingness to work for Zukor. On his own failed attempt, see Hampton, 253.

[60] Since many of these theatres were not purchased outright a precise number of the total theatres is nearly impossible and estimates of FPL's theaters vary. Hampton says between "four or five hundred," by 1921, 258; Sklar says "some six hundred" by 1921; Koszarski says "303 theatres" by 1921, 75.

Zukor's tactics sparked concerns among different branches in the industry, but theater owners were the first to explode.[61] At a Cleveland convention in June 1920, thousands created and joined the Motion Picture Theater Owners of America (MPTOA). Members elected Sydney Cohen as their president, banding together under a seal of Lady Liberty raising her lamp above a motto that "promised an injury to one is the concern of all."[62] Cohen owned a circuit of neighborhood houses in New York. In an open letter to Zukor, he attacked FPL's practices and branded Zukor their "most dangerous enemy."[63] "Scarcely three months" later Cohen reported Zukor had given a "solemn pledge…not [to] buy or build competitive theaters" in order "to coerce the independent exhibitors."[64] The average theatre owner was not the only one with anxieties about Zukor's strategies. Indeed, Pettijohn's job at the production company owned by Lewis Selznick illustrated another side of the industry's internal divisions. In order to ensure his company's product reliable screen access Selznick asked Pettijohn to organize National Pictures Theaters.[65] Even powerful independent producers feared independent screen access was fading into a story they would tell their children about the past.

Wid's Year Book 1920 ignored these live political topics in favor of exploring how the settled one of Prohibition might affect the industry's bottom line. In a

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[61] The trade weekly the *Exhibitors Herald* became the voice for the independent theater owners in 1920-1, expressing their concerns and anger throughout the year. Almost invariably they cited a variation on "Exhibitors Declaration of Independence" as the "Most Important Event of the Year" in *Wid's Year Book 1920*, 227-33. Perusing the "What This Picture Did For Me" section of the *Exhibitors Herald* turns up a number of women theatre owners, see for instance, "Here's Story of How a Woman Exhibitor Makes It 'Go,'" *Exhibitors Herald* (June 10, 1922): 28.

[62] For Cohen's statements under the seal, see *Wid's Year Book 1920*, 191. On Cohen, see Hampton, 261, 263-5.

[63] *Exhibitors Herald*, July 3, 1920, 33.

[64] *Wid's Year Book 1920*, report of MPTOA, 191. 12,000 exhibitors had joined by 1921.

[65] Hampton, 247.

symposium entitled, "What of Prohibition?" only Pettijohn expressed a cautionary note. The need for grain conservation, Anti-German brewer sentiment, and the equation of sobriety with 100% Americanism had all helped to give the Eighteenth Amendment the final boost it needed.[66] "With the prohibition question out of the way," Pettijohn predicted, "pictures will furnish the most fertile field for salaried reformers."[67] The recently transplanted Midwestern politician understood first hand the strength and discipline of the reformers' whose savvy, grass roots strategy had used the movement's rural backbone to good effect.[68] Reformers' efforts, directed by the Anti-Saloon League (ASL), had targeted state legislatures, where cities were underrepresented, in order to marginalize the strongest opposition found in "Wet" urban centers. Devotion to strong drink, after all, was widely held to be an urban vice; the ASL's fervent hope was that "the pure stream of country sentiment and township morals" embodied in the movement might "flush out the cesspools of cities."[69] Although more than a third of Prohibition reformers lived in cities by 1910, their mostly middle class, Protestant, native-born, recently small town origins left them outnumbered in cities where the opposition of elites and immigrant wards created a largely hostile climate.[70] Given these national divisions, the "Drys" needed the war to help define the drink as not just an urban vice, but an un-American one as well. Seizing upon the unprecedented willingness to coerce conformity during the

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[66] Higham, 267-8.
[67] *Wid's Year Book 1920*, 237. Only two other men protested the 18th Amendment—and for joking reasong.
[68] On the prohibition crusade during this period I follow, Paul Boyer, *Urban Masses and Moral Order in America* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1978). See especially, 181-2, 191-200, 205-221.
[69] Anti-Saloon League in 1915, quoted in Ibid., 212.
[70] Jack S. Blocker, *Retreat from Reform* (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 1976), 11, 156.

war, the ASL successfully identified "their crusade to regulate behavior with the preservation of the American way of life."[71]

Pettijohn believed that reformers who had focused on improving society through controlling what people drank would now focus their energies on controlling how they played. Having marshaled thousands of screens in that year's presidential election for his hometown friend and political rival from Indiana—the Republican National Committee's chairman William Hays—he knew better than most the screen's potential as a political tool.[72] Consequently, he bet that a successful fight against censorship advocates would require the good-will and screens of thousands of local, small town exhibitors far from the picture palaces found in urban centers. This was the heart of his prophesy: a single-minded focus on internal politics threatened to prevent the motion picture industry from noticing, let alone preparing a solid defense against, the political storm whipping-up outside. Placed in this picture, the antagonism between the biggest producers and the bulk of exhibitors shrank dramatically, becoming a small, brightly colored figure whose position in the foreground stole attention from the ominous clouds above. But without the benefit of hindsight, Pettijohn's solitary warning appeared almost cranky. By almost any measure of economic soundness and popularity, the motion picture industry faced the new year of 1921 victorious; its delicate balancing act left many feeling like heroes and heroines who had triumphed in The End.

Just such confidence had inspired Goldwyn's pursuit of Anzia Yezierska and her stories in Hungry Hearts. "The Miracle," the short story that dominated the adaptation of her work that made it onto screens, stuck close to the industry's popular melodramatic

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[71] On the impact of the war on Prohibition's passage, see Higham, 267-9.
[72] See Ramsaye, 806-14.

formula, detailing its protagonist's fight to become a heroine in a romantic tale of her own making. Yet the Prince Charming that Yezierska created for the heroine, Sara, gave the story an unusual twist that might have struck many as a tragedy rather than a triumph. Sara's prince was an ideal representative of what was then commonly called the Anglo-Saxon race. In this period when the pseudo-science of race elaborately classified the different ethnic groups composing the human race into distinct biological subspecies such a union presented a version of American nationalism under increasing assault. Referred to simply as "teacher," this man offers Sara instruction in how to value what her heartfelt "Oriental" people bring to him personally, and to America at large.[73] After Sara implores teacher to help her "'get cold in the heart and clear in the head'" so she might become a successful American, he contradicts her ambition saying, "Though you work in a [sweat] shop, you are really freer than I. You are not repressed as I am by the fear and shame of feeling…You are the heart, the creative pulse of America to be.'"[74] In this, the most classically melodramatic of her stories, teacher triumphs over adversity as much as Sara. For Yezierska's Anglo-Saxon prince learns to do more than respect the passionate, idealistic striving that drives Sara. Teacher recognizes that only a foreign personality such as Sara's can rescue him from the "dead grooves of sterile intellectuality" that entrap him, making their happily-ever-after union one that promises a miracle to him as much as her.[75]

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[73] Yezierska, "The Miracle," 83. Yezierska seemed to employ this classification proudly when writing, "For myself, when I write about the Oriental woman, I cannot depict her as being as sterilized as the Anglo-Saxon," in the *American Hebrew* 25 (August, 1922), quoted in Henriksen, 175.
[74] Ibid., "The Miracle," 84-5.
[75] Ibid., 87.

Here, Yezierska's work displayed a cherished ideal emblazoned across the nation's currency: "E pluribus unum," from many, one. In part, Yezierska' writing expressed what a distinguished historian of immigration calls "the essence of America's cosmopolitan faith—a conviction that this new land would bring unity out of diversity as a matter of course."[76] From the republic's earliest days the ideal had been a powerful way for the New World to differentiate itself from the Old. Unlike rigidly circumscribed European loyalties, tied to small territories composed of largely homogenous peoples with deep roots to the land, the United States was created from different states representing different peoples, religions, and interests. Immigrants all, (given that at the time the Constitution was written American Indians were held to be "naturally" vanishing from their land) what made men and women Americans was their attraction and dedication to the democratic principles of individual opportunity and liberty. So strong was this faith that, for many, mere arrival upon U.S. shores imputed a kind of natural selection. The determination exhibited by those who overwhelmingly passed through New York City demonstrated, some argued, exactly the vitality and ambition that made the country exceptional. The 1790 law also reflected the limits of the creed, allowing only the unrestricted immigration of "free, white persons" to the United States.[77] Despite periodic attacks, prompted most notably by the large scale arrival of Irish Catholics in the middle decades of the nineteenth century, the ideal stood in law. It had provided a

[76] Higham, 20. My discussion of early attitudes toward the place and role of immigration in U.S. nationalism follows Higham's still unmatched history.
[77] On the white supremacist attitudes embedded in the law, see Matthew Jacobson, *Whiteness of a Different Color* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1998), 22-31.

reliable shield for tens of millions over more than the century, a century that was ending even as Yezierska boarded the Twentieth-Century, Ltd. train heading for Hollywood.[78]

To some, Yezierska's portrayal of immigration as a source of creative national enrichment was suspect enough. But the miraculous romance that married Sara's particular "immigrant gifts" into the Anglo-Saxon American fold—transmuting the older base into an improved material—represented a danger of an altogether different order. This union between Jewish Sara and her Anglo-Saxon prince depicted just the kind of racial mixing, or "mongrelization" in the unlovely language of the day, that some feared might rend the nation's most intimate fabric. Centered as her stories were on Jewish heroines, Yezierska reversed the typical direction in which mongrelization was imagined: between Anglo-Saxon women and men of other ethnic varieties.

This more commonplace specter haunted the imagination of another book, one selling much better than Hungry Hearts, selling so well, in fact, that two more pressings were released between 1920 and 1921.[79] In the Passing of the Great Race Madison Grant vividly pictured the demise of America as a home for Anglo-Saxons, as "old stock" Americans were "literally driven off the streets" by "swarms" of immigrants aping Anglo-Saxon men's dress, imitating their language, and "beginning to take his women."[80] Grant's book, an illustration of the theory of Anglo-Saxon "race suicide," was not only popular, but influenced a host of writers in both popular and academic circles in the post-

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[78] The Know-Nothing Party was the most sustained and serious outbreak of nativism before this period, but it never developed the national strength necessary to alter immigration law.
[79] Sales cited in Higham, 271.
[80] Madison Grant, *Passing of the Great Race* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1916), 15-6, 80-1.

war period.[81] Yezierska's story about a romance across ethnic boundaries must have struck many Americans as a melodrama which decidedly did not turn out for the best in The End.

Such rising tensions may have prompted Joseph Godsol, the Goldwyn Company's chief financial backer in New York, to resist Samuel Goldwyn's purchase of Hungry Hearts at the start of 1921. The similarly Jewish Godsol argued that a "Jewish epic" would not be popular with the public. But Goldwyn maintained that Yezierska's work could succeed as "a great Americanization picture."[82] What Goldwyn banked on was that Yezierska's melodramatic tales would soften her heroines' increasingly fraught identities. Appealing to the movies loyal immigrant audience, as well as its more recent middle class fans—those "Americans of older lineage" who applauded Yezierska's stories in Good Housekeeping—Goldwyn hoped to tap their hearts and circumvent the rising tide of hostility aimed at those who resembled her characters.[83] Pettijohn would have supported the producer's strategy. Like the good "prophet" one contemporary journalist called him, he found a ray of hope that fall of 1920—despite his fears about the

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[81] On Grant, see Carey McWilliams, *A Mask for Privilege* (Boston: Little, Brown and Co., 1948), 56-60. "More than anyone else he taught the American people to recognize within the white race a three-tiered hierarchy of Mediterraneans, Alpines, and Nordics, to identify themselves as Nordics, and to regard any mixture with the other two as a destructive process of 'mongrelization,'" Higham, 271-2. Much of the racist eugenic writing between 1920-2 traces to Grant and displays special concern about those not considered European: "Orientals," or "Semites," and blacks. See Grant's leading pupil Theodore Lothrop Stoddard fears about "brown" and "yellow" races destroying Nordics in, *The Rising Tide of Color* (1920) and *The Revolt against Civilization* (1922). See also Kenneth L. Roberts' series for the *Saturday Evening Post* in 1921 published as *Why Europe Leaves Home* (1922); Burton Hendrick's series in the Progressive *World's Work*, (1922-1923); Charles W. Gould, Amer*ica, A Family Matter* (1920); Clinton Stoddard Burr, *America's Race Heritage* (1922).

[82] On Joseph Godsol, see Berg, 93-4. Telegrams quoted in Henriksen, 159.

[83] This description by *Good Housekeeping*'s editor introduced a 1920 piece published by Yezierska called, "The Immigrant Speaks," see rpt. in Henriksen, 128-9.

industry's inability to get together to address the threat of censorship.[84] Queried on the "Most Important Event of the Year" in Wid's he once more sounded a singular note in a chorus singing the praises of the exhibitor's movement or the improved artistry of movies. To Pettijohn, "the recognition which the motion picture industry received" when asked by "a joint resolution of both Houses of Congress to lead the fight in America for Americanism" had been the best thing that happened to the industry that year.[85]

[84] Ramsaye, 810.
[85] *Wid's Year Book 1920*, 229.

Chapter 5.
Melodramas of Passion, Or Hollywood-Bohemia

Pettijohn's hopeful reading of Congress's request that motion pictures lead the "fight in America for Americanism" could also be interpreted in the reverse: as a sign it feared the industry was leading the country in an "un-American" direction. And, indeed, some of the industry's most attention grabbing personalities and products in the postwar period suggested this was the direction the industry and its fans wanted to go.[1] The cleaned-up, sanitized Americanization version of *Hungry Hearts* that Goldwyn released would disappear without a ripple.[2] What created some of the biggest waves were movies that might be called Europeanization products instead. *Passion*, one of the first films imported from Germany after the war, dramatically illustrated the trend.[3] The film drew packed audiences and critical hosannas over 1921.[4] Directed by Ernst Lubitsch and starring Pola Negri, it displayed Berlin's growing pre-eminence as Europe's postwar

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[1] Two important surveys by historians of the film industry have both argued that significant changes took place after World War One. See, Robert Sklar, *Movie-Made America* (Vintage: New York, 1976), chap. 6; Lary May, *Screening Out the Past* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1980), chap. 8. Like May I attempt to tie these shifts to much broader social and political changes. But in general my argument about how these changes work more closely resembles Sklar's. He avoids arguing these changes derived from and produced a different political, class based agenda to explore how the industry offered fans access to a new range of "passionate" emotion and dreams.

[2] Louise Levitas Henriksen, *Anzia Yezierska* (New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 1988).

[3] Originally released in Germany as *Madame du Barry* (UFA 1919). In the US as *Passion* (First National 1920). Print viewed at the German Society screening at the Library of Congress, July 14, 2003. All quotes from the film.

[4] On box offices, see "'Passion' Sets Record," *Exhibitors Herald*, July 23, 1921, 56. For a summary of critical and popular success in the mainstream press, see "The Menace of German Films," *The Literary Digest* (May 14, 1921): 28-30. For *Photoplay*, see Paul Scaramazza, ed., *Ten Years in Paradise* (Arlington, VA: The Pleasant Press, 1974), 15.

cultural capital.[5] "The Menace of German Films" like *Passion* attracted the anxious attention of producers in the U.S. who were eager to turn commercial advantages produced by the war into permanent imperial privileges.[6] Determined to absorb the competition, film producers wooed German talent to Hollywood throughout 1921—particularly *Passion*'s raven-haired, Polish star Pola Negri. [7]

Advertisements for the film's American release illustrated the fanfare surrounding Negri and her portrayal of Madame du Barry, the infamous milliner-turned-mistress of the King of France: "POLA NEGRI AND A CAST OF 5000 PEOPLE in Passion…This is a story of a wonder woman—the world's most daring adventuress."[8] To emphasize that Negri's adventures are strictly sensual, the German film's original title was changed from *Madame du Barry* to *Passion*. Negri's "fresh from the country" Jeanne acts the romantic swashbuckler rather than a corrupted innocent, following "adventure, siren fingered" into the arms of a succession of men, satirically upending the typical fate met

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[5] The Berlin film scene took off under the Allied blockade and the German government's decision to invest in cinema as a tool of propaganda, producing the state supported UFA. See John Baxter, *The Hollywood Exiles* (New York: Taplinger Publishing Co., 1976), 19-53. For Berlin's role as the new center of European art and the magnet for its artists, see Peter Gay, *Weimar Culture*; *The Outsider as Insider* (New York: Harper & Row, 1970).

[6] The trend is described in "The Foreign Invasion," *Wid's Year Book 1921* (New York and Hollywood: Wid's Films and Film Folks, Inc., 1921), 207-9. The success of *The Golem*, *Deception*, and *Passion*, were described as discrediting the idea that "European pictures could not compete with our own in the American market." See also, "The Menace of German Films," *The Literary Digest*, 28-30. On the importance of the international audience to the industry after 1917, see Ruth Vasey, *The World According to Hollywood, 1918-1939* (Madison: University of Wisconsin, 1997).

[7] Pola Negri's given name was Apollonia Chalupetz and she arrived under contract to FPL at the end of 1922. On her ardent wooing, see Pola Negri, *Memoirs of a Star* (Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1970), 178-8; Adolph Zukor with Dale Kramer, *The Public Is Never Wrong* (New York: G. P. Putnam's Sons, 1953), 226-7; Herbert Howe, "The Real Pola Negri," *Photoplay* (November 1922): 38; Joan Jordan, "You Can't Hurry Pola," *Photoplay* (March 1923): 63.

[8] Quoted in Jeanine Basinger, *Silent Stars* (New England: Wesleyan University Press, 1999), 242.

by the single, country girl come to the city. Jeanne playfully enacts a naïf one minute, a dominatrix the next, displaying a multifaceted sexuality that delights in directing erotic games. Even her plea while waiting to loose her head—"One moment more! Life is so sweet!"—suggests pleasures taken in a life of sin. Jeanne ultimately pays for her wicked ways with her life, but the film's action drove its narrative outside of the industry's revamped melodramatic mode. Although prewar melodramas made room for assertive women's adventures, they treated overt displays of female sexuality as behavior that separated good women from bad.[9] But passionate performances by those like Negri complicated this picture. Playing a heroine who follows her passions simply for the pleasure it gives, Jeanne defies traditional gender categories in a different narrative about virtue and vice in "girls." *Passion* grounded its heroine's sexual expressiveness in her status as a free acting individual in pursuit of new landscapes of work and adventure. But critics charged that if heroines explored eroticism with impunity, their passions might lead them to confuse good with evil, to act no better than the average man. The destruction of proper womanhood—long hostage to the sexual double standard—enabling young women to pursue a course that would lead to moral relativism, hasten race suicide, and destroy the sanctity of the home.[10]

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[9] For a discussion that makes this point in relationship to the vamp, see Janet Staiger, *Bad Women* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1995), 147-162.

[10] While many scholars have usefully complicated the picture of middle class sexuality and gender roles in the Victorian period, I think none have challenged the notion the notion that this ideal exerted a hegemonic power in establishing respectable femininity as dependent upon sexual purity and premarital chastity, see Barbara Welter, "The Cult of True Womanhood, 1820-1860," *American Quarterly* 18.3 (1966): 151-174. For a summary of the demographic evidence that supports Welter's cultural and intellectual analysis, see John D'Emilio and Estelle Freedman, *Intimate Matters* (New York: Harper & Row, 1988), 77-8, 176-8, 199.

In the postwar period, a growing number of reformers connected the industry's turn to immoral passion-photoplays to the decline in the manners and morals of a new generation of women whose changed fashions signaled a change in their desires. A "CAMPAIGN AGAINST UNCLEAN MOVIES" *The Brooklyn Daily Eagle* launched in January 1921 used *Passion* as one powerful example of the danger that Hollywood's product posed to daughters in the Borough of Homes and Churches and beyond.[11] An independent paper aimed at Brooklyn's great middle class, the newspaper galvanized a movement that brought a state censorship board to New York in August. As we will see in the next chapter, the *Eagle*'s campaign was just one of many actions among middle class, "old stock" Americans demonstrating their determination to force state authorities to take responsibility for ensuring that a culture industry suddenly claiming an audience with a previously unimaginable size showed only morally fit films.

The coincident frenzy in the press over the "relaxation of manners and morals" among young women accounted for some of the new attention the industry received.[12] Though the debate purported to be about the entire "younger generation," even a cursory

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[11] Fredrick Boyd Stevenson, "How Brooklyn Is Getting Into Action For A Campaign Against Unclean Movies," *Brooklyn Daily Eagle*, February 13, 1921, Music, Art, Theaters, and Women section, 1.

[12] The indispensable account of the 1920s "youth revolt" remains, Paula Fass, *The Damned and the Beautiful* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1977). After conducting three massive surveys of colleges, religious institutions, and newspapers, *The Literary Digest* published its finding in: "Is the Younger Generation in Peril?"(May 14, 1921):9-12, 58-73; "The Religious Press on Youthful Morals," (May 21, 1921): 27-8, 52-60; "To-Day's Morals and Manners—the Side of 'the Girls' (July 9, 1921): 34-42. *Pictorial Review*, a woman's monthly aimed at the middle class, displayed a similar obsession, running more stories on the topic than any other between 1920-1, see particularly Marion Harland, "What Shall We Do With These Young Girls?" *Pictorial Review* (November 1920), 17; Helen Ferris, "Just a Moment Mrs. Grundy!" *Pictorial Review* (August 1921): 23, 26; "Is the Girl of To-day as Bad as She's Painted?" *Pictorial Review* (January 1922): 12-3, 49; Nellie Weathers, "The Modern Girl Speaks for Herself," *Pictorial Review* (March 1922): 22, 106.

inspection of articles on the topic revealed the trouble was with women variously referred to as "modern girls," "problem girls," or "the 'Flapper Problem.'" "Is 'THE OLD FASHIONED GIRL,' with all that she stands for in sweetness, modesty, and innocence, in danger of becoming extinct?" opened the first in a trio of massive surveys on the topic published in *The Literary Digest* in 1921.[13] "Girls to-day wear too few clothes and require too much 'petting,'" lamented one college boy. Indeed, women's dress styles changed radically in these years.[14] Hemlines went up, ornamentation went down, and the accentuation of breasts and hips disappeared, creating a straight, unified silhouette displaying a distinctly real feminine figure. These easily mass-produced designs also used tactile, mobile fabrics that cut across the back, arms, and calves to suggest "how the female body actually felt to its owner, and how it might feel to the touch of others."[15] The result: for the first time clothes exhibited "female sexuality in direct terms"; women's and men's bodies appeared equal in scale for the first time in two centuries.

Here was the model for the new-woman-as-flapper that public commentary obsessively fastened upon after the war: a young, middle class white women whose alleged social and sexual freedom to smoke, drink, and run around like the boys precipitated the twenties' so-called "revolution in manners and morals."[16] The

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[13] *The Literary Digest*, "Is the Younger Generation," 9.
[14] Here I follow Anne Hollander, *Sex and Suits* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1994), 126-38. Hollander argues that changes in modern fashions for women had less to do with comfort—formerly most women found concealment, constriction, and decorative projection "comfortable"—and more with expressing new customs regarding female corporeal pleasure that were linked to changes in sexual fantasies associated with new social practices like close couple dancing and the movies. See also Kevin Yellis, "Prosperity's Child," *American Quarterly* 21.2 (1969): 44-64.
[15] Hollander, 131, 34.
[16] The term was first used in Fredrick Lewis Allen, *Only Yesterday* (New York: Harper, 1931). For a persuasive account of the limitation of this term's use among even those

limitations of this claim and the more complicated genealogy of many different sorts of new women have been thoughtfully detailed.[17] Yet after the war, the embrace of new styles and social practices among this set marked a real departure, one supported by less visible changes associated with the rise in premarital sex and more permissive attitudes about erotic exploration.[18] "The whole revolution in the field of sexual moral, turns upon the fact that external controls of the chastity of women is becoming impossible," observed Walter Lippmann.[19] While no doubt sensationalized, "'the freedom of the gentler sex to follow Dame Fashion wherever she may lead,'" spoke to a new willingness of middle class women to try on styles and customs that had previously been associated with the dance hall cultures of the urban, often immigrant, working class.[20]

According to the *Digest*'s surveys, the movies were primarily responsible for inculcating young women with these desires. "'High school girls'" took "'their ideals from the sensational movie,'" and then created "'the extreme social life'" of colleges was

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historians who sought to backdate the intellectual and cultural origins of a cultural reorientation see, Estelle Freedman, "The New Woman: Changing Views of Women in the 1920s," *Journal of American History* 61.2 (1974): 372-393.

[17] The literature on the new woman is voluminous. Some of the most influential accounts include, James McGovern, "The American Woman's Pre-World War I Freedom in Manners and Morals," *Journal of American History* 55.2 (1968): 315-33; Caroll Smith-Rosenberg, "The New Woman as Androgyne," in *Disorderly Conduct* (New York: Alfred A, Knopf, 1985), 245-96; Lois Banner, *American Beauty* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1884), chaps. 12, 16; Martha Banta, *Imagining American Women* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1987).

[18] See Fass, particularly chaps. 1, 4, 6. On how the rate of premarital intercourse jumped to roughly 50% of women coming of age in the twenties, see D'Emilio and Freedman, *Intimate Matters*, 256. For a survey of 777 middle class females in 1938 found that of those born between 1890 and 1900, 74% remained virgins until marriage, for those born after 1910 the figure dropped to 31.7%, see William Chafe, *The American Woman* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1972), 95. See also Daniel Scott Smith and Michael S. Hindus, "Pre-Marital Pregnancy in America," *Journal of Interdisciplinary History* 5.4 (1975): 537-70. The authors found that pregnant brides rose steadily after 1900.

[19] Walter Lippmann, *A Preface to Morals* (New York: MacMillan, 1929), 288.

[20] *The Literary Digest*, "Is the Younger Generation?" 58.

how a Dean of Women described the process.[21] Such concerns were coincident with the growing impression that women were the industry's primary consumers. In 1920, *The New York Times* reported that women made-up 60 percent of movie audiences; by 1924 *Photoplay* put the figure at 75 percent.[22] "It doesn't much matter what men like; the women lead to the box office. The word obey in the marriage service has never applied to moviegoing," asserted a reviewer who called the "flapper" the movies new "representative public."[23] The flapper's "sophistication" had created a "revolution" in tastes in stars. This was also the official position of those in the business who argued that success depended upon the ability to turn out films that appealed to "public tastes and morals."[24] Adolph Zukor, president of FPL/Paramount, offered a variation of this view. "Our prime aim was always to keep abreast of audience taste," he asserted, tellingly adding "and ahead if possible."[25] "Consequently, film subject matter was changing to fit the times." To Zukor, "the post war revolution of manners and morals" and the

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[21] Lillian Dimmit, Dean of Women at Morningside College quoted in Ibid., 61. See also the next chapter, "Melodramas of Crisis." For accounts that stress the ethnic and religious dimension to the fight over films in the twenties, see Garth Jowett, "'A Capacity for Evil': The 1915 Supreme Court *Mutual* Decision," *Historical Journal of Film, Television, and Radio* 9.1 (1989): 59-78; Charles Musser, "Hollywood, Main Street, and the Church," in Francis Couvares, ed., *Movie Censorship and American Culture* (Washington: Smithsonian Institution Press, 1996), 129-58.

[22] Stephen Bush, "Scenarios by the Bushel," *The New York Times*, December 5, 1920. Fredrick James Smith, "Does Decency Help or Hinder?" *Photoplay* (November 1924): 36, quoted in Richard Koszarski, *An Evening's Entertainment* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1991), 30. Again, there is no reliable means to accurately judge the precise composition of audiences and my interest is more in perception than statistics.

[23] Herbert Howe, "Is Mary Pickford Finished?" *The Preview*, March 25, 1924, 7-11, Mary Pickford Clippings File, Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences, Los Angeles; hereafter, MP File, AMPAS.

[24] Dyer of General Film Co., speaking for producers, "Motion Picture Commission, Hearings before the Education, House of Representatives Sixty-Third Congress, Second Session; Bills to Establish a Federal Motion Picture Commission," (Washington: Government Printing Office, 1914), 23.

[25] Zukor, 202.

"appearance" of "the flapper" left the industry "caught in the middle" of a feud between youthful fans and their "aghast" elders. But, as Zukor hinted, satisfying fans also emboldened the industry to create more than mere reflections of popular tastes. It sought to fashion stories and stars that anticipated and shaped audiences' desires.

The emergence of "modern girls" and the debate about their morals did not begin in 1921, but, in crucial respects, early Hollywood's experiments with challenging the boundaries of the sexual order reached their outer limit that year. This chapter is about the character of this moment, its icons, and the reaction that allowed it to flourish in spite of, or perhaps because of, public critiques. By that year, Hollywood, the nation's first mass culture, had become "a great basin," absorbing, repackaging, and commodifying artistic customs originating from both "high" and "low" culture and then feeding them to the mainstream as an idealized picture of how all could play.[26] Early Hollywood's products, personalities, and publicity invited women of various classes and backgrounds

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[26] Gerald Early, *Tuxedo Junction* (Hopewell, NJ: Ecco Press, 1989), ix. Early refers to popular culture. For a recent synthesis of critical debates over the definition of popular and mass culture in the US, see Michael Kammen, *American Culture, American Tastes* (New York: Knopf, 1999). I follow Kammen in defining mass culture as commercialized products deliberately designed to appeal to, at least, a national audience with a tendency to commodify what it absorbs. However, I do not follow his definition of commodification or his periodization. Kammen considers mass culture to have only emerged full flown with t.v. in the 1950s. Such a consideration is possible only because he ignores the movies. Nor do I agree with the broad generalization that mass culture induced only passivity and the privatization of culture. In the period under my purview, moviegoing was a public, social, and interactive experience and, because of the controversy and debate surrounding it, a politically charged activity. For an analysis that views moviegoing up through Hollywood's consolidation in the teens as an "alternative" public sphere for women, see Miriam Hansen, *Babel and Babylon* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1991), 90-125. It is possible to argue that mass culture's absorption of popular culture involves the erasure of the artistry of socially marginal groups. But my point is that these new inventions are still picked up and elaborated upon by forms like the movies and that in this period their sources were often explicitly identified as coming from outside the boundaries of traditional cultural custodians and were understood as opposed to their interests.

to imagine themselves in romantic roles and encouraged them to seek ways to fulfill in their own lives the dreams they watched on screen. The promotion of such fantasies was the explicit aim of the movie industry which sought to stake out a position as the purveyor of "the next big thing," as an international trendsetter that cleared the way for the modern middle class woman by recasting urban dance hall cultures in forms associated with an Orientalized, continental sophistication and glamour. The fan magazines often validated and celebrated the modes of sexuality and social roles displayed on and off screens too well. The rise of a group of cosmopolitan personalities, including Gloria Swanson, Elinor Glyn, Alla Nazimova, and Rudolph Valentino, modeled what opportunities the new modes of expression and exploration could provide. The social world these first "Hollywood-ites" inhabited seemed to represent, as some observed, a new "Bohemia," a free-wheeling artistic colony populated by a host of free-spirited "extra-girls," a place that defied conventions to set the trends. In short, to critics and fans alike, the explosion of Hollywood as product, place and an approach to life set the Roaring Twenties' tone, creating the most widespread depictions of the period's first sexual revolution. That year of 1921, most especially, Early Hollywood presented a drama that mirrored a larger social question: could young women's desire to consider themselves a subject worthy of romance include a sexual standard that resembled men's and turn out for the best in The End?

In the years in which Hollywood came to occupy a place in the popular imagination, the fan culture displayed in *Photoplay*—"the first fan magazine for the first fans" and quickly the most popular and well produced fan monthly—created a particular

discourse aimed at women fans.[27] To a significant degree, *Photoplay* traded on encouraging women's active involvement in viewing what happened in Hollywood as having consequences for their own lives. The strategy partially resembled the one found in Louella Parsons's columns as early as 1915. One common storyline in *Photoplay* presented Hollywood as a business uniquely open to women's professional advancement. Contests promised lucky readers the opportunity to shape screenplays and theaters, or even the chance to take a place beside their favorite scenario writer, "cutter" (editor), or star. Dozens of articles entwined supporting female personalities with promoting young women's ambitions. "How to Win Screen Success," a 1920 *Photoplay* cover-story allegedly written by Paramount's Vice President in charge of production Jesse Lasky,

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[27] Adela Rogers St. Johns, *The Honeycomb* (Garden City, NY, 1969), 100. Here, I distinguish between trade papers aimed at those with a stake in manufacturing and exhibiting films and fan periodicals designed for individuals who were only fans. Trade papers existed from the industry's start, but periodicals specifically for fans developed only in the 1910s. I follow Kathryn Fuller, *At the Picture Show* (Washington: Smithsonian Institution Press, 1996) and Gaylyn Studlar, "The Perils of Pleasure: Fan Magazine Discourse as Women's Commodified Culture," *Wide Angle* 13:1 (1991): 6-33. Both authors argue that fan magazines operated as a forum that attempted to regulate moviegoing and as a space for dialogue between the industry and its fans. In 1922, *Photoplay* was a national publication, with a large staff of female writers and editors, and a circulation of two-million, the largest of all fan magazines. Between 1910 and 1916, *Photoplay*'s editor James Quirk reoriented the magazine between 1910 and 1916 from one aimed at men to one aimed at women by redesigning its focus from a technical magazine aimed at camera hobbyists and would-be writers to one that emphasized stories about stars, the social culture of those in the industry. Fuller argues this was accompanied by redefining its audience from masculine, active and technologically informed to passive and feminine. I dispute this idea, given that what most struck my eye was how, compared to fan magazines today, it dramatically emphasized selling women a role in the industry through the "how they succeeded" genre—a genre about not just actresses, but women in all aspects of the business—and scenario, star, and theatre design contests which solicited readers' views on all kinds of subjects. Although she does not specifically address how *Photoplay* played to women's creative ambitions, in crucial respects my view more closely resembles Studlar's, who argues that its ironic, knowing tone and readers' voluminous correspondence encouraged more than simply the industry's uncritical consumption.

was one such piece.[28] It neatly displayed how women's interest in female stars might be conjoined with advancing their own success. Since "there are and probably always will be many more idolized young women than men," Lasky claimed women had "a bigger a stellar opportunity." The how-to-become-an-actress genre remained *Photoplay*'s most common type of "how-to" literature immediately after the war, but by 1921 more notes of caution crept into the stories. "What Every Girl Wants to Know" confessed that the industry's rapid growth and consolidation had made it more difficult for newcomers to get a break.[29] "In the future," writers would have to "be increasingly discouraging to the feminine youth of the land." But the writer continued that young women's yearning:

> to see themselves as they see their favorite stars… is nothing to be ashamed of; in fact it is a very laudable ambition. In passing we might credit the screen with administering a knockout to the old fashioned pre-film days. The girl of today, as compared to her sisters of preceding generations, has it 'on' the later…when it comes to having something for which to wish and dream and work. It is a golden lighted road to fame and fortune that had a dim counterpart yesterday in the way to stage success…Every one of them has the chance to be a Mary Pickford or a Norma Talmadge… .

More and more, publicity writing aimed at female fans depicted women's heroine worship as an end in itself. By supporting heroines, women were told they bolstered an industry that approved of their modern, independent minded ways. They were encouraged to understand that simply picturing themselves as their favorite stars allowed them to imagine how they might lead more romantic, glamorous lives.

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[28] Jesse Lasky, "How to Win Screen Success," *Photoplay* (February 1920): 32

[29] Alfred A Cohn, "What Every Girl Wants to Know," *Photoplay* (June 1919): 28-9. This article was, by far, the most discouraging piece on hopefuls' chances for success. Though none of the other articles that I read through 1922 were this ambivalent, it did suggest a kind of turning point after which the element of chance entered into the equation more forcefully and louder warnings were sounded. But as though writers could not help themselves, they continued to focus on what hopefuls might do to beat the odds.

Thus the female personalities who dominated the fan culture of 1921 were explicitly portrayed as modeling new fashions in femininity that reflected and abetted women's interest in who the "Twentieth Century," "modern," or "new" woman, as *Photoplay* variously referred to her, might become.[30] The industry's obeisance to pleasing its women fans led one English actor to bemoan America as "a land where the worship is not of the hero but of the heroine," producing "many more stars feminine than masculine."[31] Fans' heroine worship also provided a means to develop Hollywood into an international fashion capital where inhabitants established what counted as new and desirable.[32] Since "the stars of silent drama are not content with following the fashions" but preferred to "introduce them," they had "revolutionized fashions as well as a lot of other things," an article entitled, "Jazzing Up the Fashions," declared.[33] Following stars' styles promised to democratize women's ability to stay au courant since Gloria Swanson and Norma Talmadge let fans in even "small middle western" cities know "what is new before Fifth Avenue" making "the saying that a new fashion would be worn in 'Paris today, New York tomorrow and the rest of the country next year'" obsolete.

Beginning in June 1920, *Photoplay* advanced the industry's position as style center with a regular column on fashion authored, ostensibly, by actress Norma

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[30] Sydney Valentine, "The Careers of Catherine Calvert," *Photoplay* (May 1921): 62, 90. The author calls Calvert an example of a new "more modern" type of "women who do things and think things for themselves. Women who work, who have a definite aim and high ambition. Twentieth century women." See other articles discussed below.
[31] Janet Flanner, "The Male Background," P*hotoplay* (December 1920): 33.
[32] On the role of Hollywood stars as the new fashion trendsetters in the 1920s, see Yellis 58-61; Hollander, 136-7, 148, 159. Both authors argue that the demand for these changes originated with American consumers and its ready to wear to industry.
[33] May Stanley, "Jazzing Up the Fashions," *Photoplay* (May 1920): 57-8.

Talmadge.[34] "The leading designers of New York and Paris today admit the movies are creating the styles—not merely following them," Talmadge announced.[35] The claim was not mere puffery to inflate the industry's sophistication and clout. Fashion histories of the twenties confirm that early Hollywood not only established most of the period's trends, but also the careers of designers like Coco Chanel and Paul Poiret.[36] Talmadge walked readers through an education in the designers, trends, and jargon associated with couture, but her approach did not leave readers feeling they had to purchase the latest custom fitted Parisian confection to look their best. Rather Talmadge stressed that "good dressing" did not result from having "money to burn." It was "a matter of line, a matter of studying one's own figure" and then selecting the right styles.[37] The instruction advocated an individualized approach to style that differed from the fashion principle adhered to by society women who followed the precise dictates of a designer. Talmadge admitted that women who could "afford to engage the services of a great stylist" had it easier. "But most of you girls can't do this—I certainly couldn't during the first years I was in motion picture work," soothing that many "with money to burn" derived "mighty poor results from the bonfire." To create their own style Talmadge advised readers to avoid "the helplessness that leaves you at the mercy of the shopkeeper," partake "in the joy of creating something," and make their own clothes. Here was consumerism as

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[34] The first article was Norma Talmadge, "What Fashion Really Means," *Photoplay* (June 1920), 64-5, 113. Illustrations accompanying articles often anticipated trends, displaying clothes whose length and lines were a year or two ahead of what mainstream catalogues like Sears featured, see Stella Blum, ed., *Everyday Fashions of the Twenties* (New York: Dover Publications, 1981):15-19; 35-8

[35] Talmadge, 64.

[36] Hollander, 135, 37.

[37] Talmadge, 65, 112.

romanticism, offering fashion as a means for women to express their individual natures through an aesthetic adornment that accentuated the variety of their figures and tastes.

In naming Talmadge "the screen's acknowledged leader of fashions" and eventually its fashion editor, *Photoplay* traded upon her established image as the screen's most down-to-earth star to set a particular tone. Considered by many the greatest dramatic actress of her day, Talmadge employed elaborate costumes and settings more like a character actress, disappearing into fabulously different states that did not effect the presentation of her personality as the screen's most level-headed, unpretentious star.[38] Talmadge was one of the many female stars who benefited from the flourishing of independent production in the years surrounding the war. Her production company—famously administered by husband Joseph Schenck—turned out lavish hit after hit from 1917 until she retired in 1930.[39] Talmadge played everything from a Chinese aristocrat murdered by the Emperor for giving birth to an illegitimate child to an immigrant girl who manages to bring two worlds together after her gambler father sends her to be educated among the rich.[40] The roles provided fans with a link to pre-war trends, earning her a "heroine worship" that elicited 4000 letters a week, mostly from women between

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[38] Adela Rogers St. Johns, "Our ONE and ONLY Great Actress," *Photoplay* (February 1926): 58, 135-7. For her ranking at the top of popularity lists as the era's great dramatic actress, see Koszarski, 262, 281-3; Anthony Slide, *Silent Players* (Lexington: University of Kentucky Press, 2002), 372-4. This was the popular opinion not shared by high-brow fans who bestowed the honor on Lillian Gish, see Charles Affron, *Lillian Gish* (New York: Scribner, 2001).

[39] "Most Important Event of the Year," *Wid's Yearbook 1918* (New York and Hollywood: Wid's Films and Film Folks, Inc., 1918), 69.

[40] *Forbidden City* (Norma Talmadge Film Corp. 1918). *Daughter of Two Worlds* (Norma Talmadge Film Corp. 1920). Both viewed at the Library of Congress. For the only extensive description of her films, see Basinger, 141-58.

the ages of 14 to 25.[41] "I always like to play parts in which modern women have the principal role. I won't play a fast woman and I won't play a stupid one," Talmadge explained in *Pictorial Review,* a woman's fashion and fiction magazine, where she claimed to choose roles that appealed "to intelligent women" where "a woman is doing something in the world for herself, by herself."[42] Her performances, on screen and off, were understated. Her publicity reiterated her working class past and happy present amidst the Talmadge clan.[43] Though childless, Norma was famously part of a brood that included a devoted mother, husband, and, most ubiquitously, Hollywood's most famous sister act: younger sisters Constance, a rising star herself, and Natalie, who, married comedian Buster Keaton in 1921.[44] The press seems to have followed the script written by her mother Peg: in need of a job Norma set her sights on the movies, worked hard, brought her family up through the ranks, enjoyed her career and good fortune, and never

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[41] "Heroine," *Chicago Herald and Examiner*, October 16, 1921, pt. 5, 5; Norma Talmadge, "What Do You Mean by 'Sex Plays," *Pictorial Review* (June 1921): 91.
[42] Talmadge, "What Do You Mean by Sex Plays," 1.
[43] "Before They Were Stars: Norma Talmadge," *New York Dramatic Mirror*, April 17, 1920, 744, 765; Marjorie Lachmund, "Our Norma," *Motion Picture* (January, 1917): 110-2; Margaret MacDonald, "Norma Talmadge, a Modern Female," *Moving Picture World*, July 21, 1917, 390; Faith Service, "The Amazing Interview," *Motion Picture Classic* (January 1920): 22-3, 87.
[44] On Natalie's marriage to Buster Keaton, see "Before and After Taking," *Photoplay* (September 1921): 31.

let it go to her head.[45] "We love our careers, our successes…but more than these we love our Loves—our families and our romance," was how she summarized the philosophy.[46]

Talmadge's personality was perfectly positioned to instruct a cross-class audience of women consumers—precisely the audience that most movies, and the industry's fan culture, focused on in the postwar period—in how to embody a new type of romantic femininity. As ambitious working girl now at home among the best money could buy, as modern career woman protected by a loving husband and mother, as a fantastic success who still enjoyed nothing better than to dish about fashion with the girls, as dramatic heroine following her heart in spite of any difficulty, Talmadge projected a model of femininity that was easier to emulate than any star of her magnitude. She personified the interests and emotions thought to band together in one vast sisterhood all modern women blessed with a modicum of disposable income. This explained why F. Scott Fitzgerald memorialized her as the epitome of twenties' glamour and the symbol of how the "cinema"—both as a professional and a metaphorical environment—represented the place "where all American women would be happy."[47]

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[45] Margaret Talmadge, *The Talmadge Sisters; Norma, Constance, and Natalie* (Philadelphia: J. B. Lippincott, 1924). Friends and coworkers agree this was one instance were truth and promotion met, in fact describing mother Peg as universally shrewd and beloved and the family as a whole as even more "down-home" than their press, see Anita Loos, *The Talmadge Girls* (New York: Viking Press, 1978), 4-7; Frances Marion, *Off With Their Heads!* (New York: MacMillan, 1972), 65; St. Johns, *The Honeycomb*, 97.
[46] Adele Whitney Fletcher, "Floating on Island on Olympus," *Motion Picture* (March 1921): 222-3, 109.
[47] F. Scott Fitzgerald, *Tender Is the Night* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1934), 310.

Indeed, Talmadge personified the slogan that described early Hollywood's target: "The Colonel's Lady and Judy O'Grady" were "sisters under the skin."[48] The expression began to crop up in *Photoplay* by 1920, signaling fan culture's self-conscious turn toward story lines and stars thought to appeal to all women. The industry hoped to override myriad distinctions separating women by combining the "class" and "mass" markets, the immigrants and the ladies, into one great consuming feminine audience.[49] *Photoplay*'s mode of address still tipped in favor of addressing working class women, with editorials extolling the movies as a "blessed refuge" for "the lonely girl" without "the money for expensive drama" after a hard day's work.[50] But the focus on fashion and love stories—stories that allowed fans "to be one with the heroine in her paradise of happy-forever-after…to dream over your ideal hero—so grandly different from all the men you know"—blatantly, and wholly, sought to appeal to the widest possible audience of "young girls," the demographic to whom *Photoplay* flatteringly confided, "if…not for you the photoplay would not exist."[51]

Such an objective also helped to account for the predominance and power of women personalities like scenarist Frances Marion in early Hollywood. Marion was one of many women who successfully fulfilled the demand for stories that dramatized topics

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[48] The two women were characters in a Rudyard Kipling poem and the expression has been called "the advertising profession's most common figure of speech" after about 1924, see Roland Marchand, *Advertising the American Dream* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1985), 65-7.

[49] The first example that I found was in Dorothy Philips (Mrs. Allen Holubar), "How to Hold Him," *Photoplay* (November 1920): 47. The actress cynical instructions to women on how to keep a marriage happy advises that men like "the sound of his on voice" more than "home," "mother," or the "sex instinct…. the all important thing for every wife to remember is this—men are always disarmed, controlled, won—by *flattery*."

[50] "The Lonely Girl," *Photoplay* (August 1919): 27.

[51] "To A Young Girl Going to a Photoplay," *Photoplay* (February 1919): 23.

that appealed to female fans in the rising generation's youth culture. After serving as a war correspondent in Europe, Marion returned to a clamor for "scenarios reeking with Love."[52] Marion's first assignment: to write a story about the "modern girl who, irked by convention, had joined the erring youth revolt and kicked over the traces. This independence sweeping the country had stamped these girls with the sobriquet flapper." Marion's 1920 film, starring Ziegfeld Follies showgirl-turned-actress Olive Thomas, was the first *Flapper* to hit screens.[53] Part sophisticate, part ingénue the film flapper symbolized the latest fashion in, and most fashionable, young woman: a slip of girl with a short skirt and bobbed hair, she smoked, danced to jazz, and drank bathtub gin, pursuing a good time like one of the boys.[54] Despite this bold behavior, the flapper did little more than "pet." Yet, her eagerness to run around with men and display her skin linked her to the vamp—the only film type to have previously flaunted such acts.

Trading on this familiarity, *Photoplay* used qualifiers like "'Vampette'" or "baby vamp" to introduce readers to the flapper.[55] The type, explained one article, was "a youngish little rascal, with "big, innocent" eyes, who had "all the experience of her…big sister—only she doesn't work at it." The description pointed to why Bara-styled vamps

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[52] Marion, 64.

[53] *The Flapper* (Selznick/Select, Alan Crosland, 1920) I did not view the film, which is available at the George Eastman House.

[54] For a description of the flapper-type that argues it encouraged "a playful subjectivity that is not simply enslaved to commodity culture" see Lori Landay, "The Film Flapper: Comedy, Dance, and Jazz Age Kinaesthetics," in Jennifer M. Bean and Diane Negra, eds., *A Feminist Reader in Early Cinema* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2002), 221-248. For another reading that argues for the contradiction and complexities of the type, see found in Mary Ryan, "The Projection of New Womanhood: The Movie Moderns in the 1920s," in Jean Friedman and William Shade, eds., *Our American Sisters* (Lexington, MA: D.C. Heath, 1978), 499-518.

[55] Kenneth McGaffey, "Introducing the 'Vampette,'" *Photoplay* (March 1919): 47

were eclipsed in the late teens.[56] Sheathed in a fashion that telegraphed a moral framework that attributed one intention to "the lightening bolt" of women's sexuality, the Bara-styled vamp wanted only to destroy foolish men.[57] Press descriptions of Bara figured her as an almost supernatural force, suggesting that only a woman from another world could possess an erotic side.[58] By the late teens the formula appeared comically one-dimensional to the twenties' flapper fans. Articles mocked Bara's style as "bizzare," debunked her persona as a "pathetic," "impossible" "fake," reducing her behavior to "hocus pocus" and "a ridiculous pose" that "defied any sort of human understanding."[59] After all, Bara was only an ordinary Midwesterner, a nice middle-class Jewish girl who had "been born Theodosia Goodman, of Cincinnati, Ohio" and got her start "in a little

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[56] For an article that attempts to modernize vamp Louise Glaum, see Hebert Howe, "Vampire or Ingenue?" *Photoplay* (August 1919): 334. Other articles that debunked, mocked, or noted the demise of the old-style vamps demise include: "A Fan's Prayer," *Photoplay* (May 1920), 45; Harry Carr, "Era of Sanity Commencing," *Los Angeles Times*, January 16, 1921; *Chicago Herald and Examiner*, "At Last! The Secret of the Vampire is Bared," October 2, 1921, pt. 5, p. 9. The article notes that "the day of the old-fashioned vamp who merely bared one-half of her body" was over.

[57] "A Fool There Was," *New York Dramatic Mirror* (January 20, 1915): 21. *A Fool There Was* (Fox 1915). Print viewed on Kino. On Fox's rigorous typing of Bara, see Robert Genini, *Theda Bara; A Biography of the Silent Screen Vamp, with a Filmography* (North Carolina, London: McFarland & Company, 1996). In *A Fool*, Bara's vamp is a supernatural force, as the establishing shots that cut from the vamp to the ocean and the cutaway to a thunderstorm when John meets the vamp suggest. Her sexuality only destroys men; as John's wife's total asexuality protects him. Bara's is a new woman of the fin-de-siecle school that portrayed sexual, independent women as reverting to an animal state, sucking the money and life from men. See, Bram Dijkstra, *Idols of Perversity* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1986), 33-51.

[58] See for instance, Wallace Franklin, "Purgatory's Ivory Angel," *Photoplay* (September 1915): 69-72; Roberta Courtland, "The Divine Theda," *Motion Picture* (April 1917): 59-62.

[59] Delight Evans, "Does Theda Bara Believe Her Own Press Agent?" *Photoplay* (May1918): 62; Agnes Smith, "The Confessions of Theda Bara," *Photoplay* (June 1920): 57. See also, Bara's attempts to escape and explain the vamp type, Theda Bara, "How I Became a Film Vampire," *The Forum* 62 (June 1919): 715-27; Theda Bara, "The Curse of the Moving-Picture Actress," *The Forum* 62 (July 1919): 83-93.

Jewish Theatre on the East Side."[60] As its association with flapper displayed, "vamp" had become an adjective modifying an array of different types of women—and men—whose eroticism affected their personas in more complicated ways.

Early Hollywood offered other, more daringly adult, symbols about who a modern young flapper might grow up to become. In the postwar period, no one personality so successfully embodied such possibilities like Gloria Swanson.[61] By 1921, Swanson's success with her flapper fans allowed her to demand star treatment at FPL/Paramount where she replaced Pickford as the reigning "Queen of the Movies."[62] Swanson also assumed another of Pickford's previous roles, becoming the single star who "bolstered [Paramount's] whole program," the personality who compelled exhibitors "to take weak features" it would "have had trouble selling."[63] Between 1919 and 1921, Swanson rose to stardom in six films directed by Cecil B. DeMille. The director claimed to have spotted her potential after witnessing the "authority" she could radiate "simply leaning against a door" on film.[64]

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[60] Evans, "Does Theda Bara Believe Her Own Press Agent," 63, 107.

[61] On Swanson's unsurpassed reputation by the time of his book and her particular appeal for women fans, see Terry Ramsaye, *A Million and One Nights*, (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1954, rpt. 1925), 824-30. On the "unconventional" arc of her career, see Koszarski, 293-6.

[62] Jesse Lasky with Don Weldon, *I Blow My Own Horn* (Garden City: Doubleday & Co., 1957), 191.

[63] Ibid. Telegrams to Adolf Zukor (AZ) from Jesse Lasky(JL) documenting his 1925 negotiation to keep Swanson (referring to her simply as "Our Star") from moving to UA display her importance. Ultimately Lasky offered her a six picture, two year contract with a 300,000 advance per picture against 50% of its profits. Swanson moved to UA anyway. See JL to AZ, June 29, 1925; JL to AZ, July 3-4, 1925, Adolf Zukor correspondence, file 8, AMPAS.

[64] Cecil B. DeMille and Donald Hayne, ed., *The Autobiography of Cecil B. DeMille* (Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice Hall, 1959), 221. Swanson's films with DeMille include: *Don't Change Your Husband* (Famous Player-Lasky 1919); *Male and Female* (Famous Player-Lasky 1919); *For Better, For Worse* (Famous Player-Lasky 1919); *Why Change*

Lasky had convinced DeMille to direct the films that were variously called "marriage and divorce pictures" or "sex pictures." "What the public demands to-day is modern stuff with plenty of clothes, rich sets, and action" "full of modern problems and conditions," Lasky wrote, urging him to have screenwriter Jeanie MacPherson adapt a popular novel entitled, *Old Wives for New*.[65] Before going to work as DeMille's primary collaborator and writer in 1914, MacPherson was first an actress and then a director at Universal with her own production unit for two years.[66] With the news full of stories on the problems of modern marriage and rising divorce rates, *Old Wives for New*, *Don't Change Your Husband*, and *Why Change Your Wife?* all addressed the question of how to keep the flame burning *after* marriage. The films detailed the exploits of sexually adult partners who treated divorce, infidelity, and fashion makeovers as solutions to the problem of marriages grown loveless or simply dull.

Awash in lavish costumes and settings and extolling the importance of staying fashionable, fun, and sexy in marriage, DeMille's films have been mined for their relationship to the values associated with the rise of consumer culture.[67] The most extensive film historian of DeMille's work, Sumiko Higashi, considers the movies to have scripted a "new woman" "entrapped in a process of self-commodification," making her a "sexual commodity symbolizing the reification of human relationships, especially

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Your Wife? (Famous Player-Lasky 1920); *Something to Think About* (Famous Player-Lasky 1920); *The Affairs of Anatol* (Famous Player-Lasky 1921).

[65] Lasky to DeMille, January 6, 1917, quoted in Sumiko Higashi, "The New Woman and Consumer Culture," in Bean and Negra, eds., 301. DeMille also attributes the production of the films to Lasky's repeated urgings, 212-4.

[66] On MacPherson, see Lizzie Franke, *Script Girls* (London: British Film Institute, 1994), 13-5.

[67] In addition to Higashi, see the more nuanced reading offered in May, chap. 8.

marital ones, in a consumer society."[68] Such a view uses Foucaultian theory and a blunt Marxist analysis to replace the subjective meanings that motivate and inform conduct.[69] Simply put, Highashi imputes intentions to women's behavior and attitudes toward consumption that cannot be demonstrated simply by focusing on the work and attitudes of one man—whether Foucault or DeMille. Such an approach reproduces the stereotype, dating back at least to English women's novel devouring habits in the eighteenth century, that women are particularly susceptible to losing their heads in the presence of imaginative products. It equates consumerism with one familiar meaning: the production of passive, narcissistic feminine subjects.[70] This one dimensional reading ignores stars, and the broader construction of their personalities in fan culture, to focus on reading a few select films. Taking seriously what these films suggested to fans demands a sense of what made early Hollywood's stars dramatic—and controversial—to Americans in their day. "She looked like she knew what life was all about, and in those days that was a sin for which you could be burned as witch," was how one contemporary remembered the effect of her performance in *Why Change Your Wife?*[71]

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[68] Higashi, 'The New Woman," 302, 303. See also, Sumiko Higashi, *Cecil B. DeMille and American Culture* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1994). The analysis of marriage as an economic exchange began not with films, but among women's rights activists in the nineteenth century.

[69] Following Foucault, she blasts any author who suggests that the Victorian views on sexuality were different or more "repressed" than modern ones, though she resorts to talking about the impact of DeMille's films as dissolving "the moral certainties of the Victorian synthesis," Higashi, "The New Woman," 321.

[70] Higashi's approach dominated feminist film studies after the publication of Laura Mulvey, "Visual Pleasure and Narrative Cinema," *Screen* 16:3 (1975): 6-18. For more recent approaches that offer more theoretically informed critiques, see Studlar, "Perils of Pleasure"; Victoria de Grazia and Ellen Furlough, eds., *The Sex of Things* (Berkeley: University of California, 1996), 11-24.

[71] Howe, "Is Mary Pickford," *The Preview*, 11.

Without a doubt, DeMille's films launched Swanson as "a sophisticated clotheshorse" who reveled in wearing the best that money could buy. But such a fact reveals little about why Swanson, as opposed to any other well-dressed actress, emerged as a distinct personality: the "screen's first real glamour queen."[72] Despite Lasky's intention to use the films to subvert the star system with a cost-cutting All-Star-No Star approach, Swanson quickly "settled the question as to acting" and emerged as a star.[73] "We do not hesitate to proclaim Gloria Swanson one of the distinct acquisitions of the silent play, not only pictorially, but dramatically," declared *Motion Picture Magazine* after *Don't Change Your Husband*.[74] Swanson's image set new trends. The first to forgo the rage for tiny cupid's bow lips, she "emphasized the generous outline" of her mouth and wore "her straight dark hair" around "her head, turban fashion, while nary a feminine curl dangled on her forehead to disturb the chiseled contours of her face."[75] As comfortable in Parisian couture as an "Oriental headdress," her fashion choices signaled comfort with the famed sensuality of both the French and the "Far East."[76] Depicted as a homegrown exotic, Swanson's image communicated what famed romance writer Elinor Glyn called a "sultry glamour," suggesting "a new kind of woman altogether—daring, provocative, sensuous."[77] To both Glyn and Marion, Swanson's adult sensuality allowed

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[72] Lasky, *I Blow My Own Horn*, 140.
[73] She Changed Her Coiffure," *Photoplay* (September 1920): 33. Lasky expressed this intention in Lasky to DeMille, January 6, 1917, quoted in Higashi, "The New Woman," 301. For one report about the move to "unstarring" the many stars who were not "legitimate," see "Era of Sanity is Commencing," *Los Angeles Times*, January 16, 1921, pt. III, 1.
[74] http://www/silentsaregolden.com/dontchangeyourhusbandreview.html
[75] Marion, 69.
[76] "She Changed Her Coiffure" *Photoplay*, 33.
[77] Glyn quoted in Anthony Glyn, *Elinor Glyn* (London: Hutchinson & Co., 1955), 278. Gloria Swanson, *Swanson on Swanson* (New York: Random House, 1980), 160.

her to safely project a familiarity with the facts of life that explained why she became not only the first actress to openly parade her motherhood, but succeeded in bringing babies "into vogue."[78] Swanson "didn't just represent glamour," she "invented it," recalled Colleen Moore, the actress poised to become the definitive film flapper.[79] She created what a *Photoplay* writer called "the all-time prototype image of A Movie Star."[80]

In establishing glamour as essential to the prototype of the postwar movie star, Swanson embodied a quality that historian Peter Bailey has called "a distinctively modern visual property."[81] The use of glamorous images like Swanson's helped to account for how consumer capitalism spread and normalized new sexual performances and customs in public. Glamorous strategies marketed a "middle ground of sexuality," in Bailey's words; an "open yet licit" form of eroticism glamour was "deployed but contained, carefully channeled rather than fully discharged."[82] The approach helped to make representations of largely, though not exclusively, female bodies an increasing acceptable if contested feature of modern public life. Swanson displayed another

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[78] Marion, 98. For accounts of motherhood see, LPSB #4, "Gloria Swanson in Elinor Glyn Story," November 24, 1920; Adela Rogers St. Johns, "Sight-Seeing the Movies; A personally conducted tour of the Hollywood film colony," *Photoplay* (April 1921): 31; Elinor Glyn, "A Photobiography of Gloria Swanson," *Photoplay* (June 1921): 24.
[79] Colleen Moore, *Silent Star* (Garden City, NY: Doubleday., 1968), 103. Moore bobbed her hair in 1920, but did not become the definitive flapper until the release of *Flaming Youth* (First National 1923).
[80] St. Johns, *Honeycomb*, 103.
[81] My understanding of glamour derives from Peter Bailey, "The Victorian Barmaid as Cultural Prototype," ch. 7 in *Popular Culture and Performance in the Victorian City* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 1998), 156. For analysis that uses Bailey's argument to account for the more complicated readings of women's responses to the commercialized use of women's bodies, see Joanne Meyerowitz, "Women, Cheesecake, and Boderline Material: Responses to Girlie Pictures in the Mid-Twentieth Century U.S.," *Journal of Women's History* 8.3 (Fall 1996): 9-33.
[82] Bailey, 151.

important aspect of glamour: the space it opened up for the possibility that women's sexuality might act as natural and positive part of her personality.

Glamour was neither strictly synonymous with beauty nor with sex. Instead, its provenance lay in poetry, in an allure fashioned from mystery, magic, and contrivance that held the power to transform bearer and beholder alike.[83] Never considered a great beauty in her day, Swanson's famed "ability to wear clothes" suggested glamour's creation through the expert manipulation of externals that changed a good looking woman into a magnetic force.[84] To this façade, Swanson added a manner characterized as "gracious though cool," "indifferent to the critical glances of women, the flattering attention of men."[85] Distance—in Swanson's case both the objective absence created by her mechanically reproduced image and the subjective remove fashioned by her aloof personality—then was central to the exercise of glamour. Distance allowed Swanson to heighten and enhance the promise of erotic possibility while simultaneously controlling, safeguarding, and elevating her status not so much as erotic object, but as a glamorous subject. For Swanson's persona did not suggest a victimized, passive woman who deferred to the desires of her beholder. Swanson appeared to be an independent manager of her sexuality, bestowing value upon her beholder. Her behavior also suggested the kinds of competencies that could translate into increased authority and access to new pleasures for some women in modern times.

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[83] *The New Shorter Oxford English Dictionary, vol. I* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1993), 1096.
[84] Marshall Neilan, "Acting for the Screen,' in O*pportunities in the Motion Picture Industry* (Los Angeles: Photoplay Research Society, 1922), 11.
[85] Marion, 69.

Glamour was not foisted upon women workers in early Hollywood like Swanson—or the fans who supported her rise. Rather many ambitious women helped to design and develop glamorous images as a means to pursue more financially rewarding, exciting jobs, more independent, free spirited lives. Swanson's glamorous "clotheshorse" image also displayed the industry's role in helping to sell the "expressive" consumer goods that fuelled the dramatic expansion of the nation's economy after the century's turn.[86] Between 1900 and 1930, wages almost tripled and the net national product climbed from 15.8 to 70.3 billion.[87] Commercialized cultural pursuits like the movies and the record industry, and the amount spent on clothes, cosmetics, and home décor, accounted for the largest increase, jumping 800% in the decade between 1914 and 1924.[88] Much like the assumption that women decided what movie a family would see, they were also widely believed to select the vast majority of expressive consumer commodities purchased for a household.[89] What these goods shared was their connection to what designer Elsie deWolfe called questions of "aesthetic tastes" in her 1915 smash book, *The House in Good Taste.*[90] DeWolfe, a former stage actress turned America's

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[86] The term "expressive goods" is taken from Lorna Weatherill, "The meaning of consumer behavior in late seventeenth-century and early eighteenth-century England," in John Brewer and Roy Porter, eds. *Consumption and the World of Goods* (London: Routledge, 1993), 207-27. Weatherill uses the terms to focus on the demand for, and meanings of, the household and clothing goods that fueled the consumer revolution.
[87] Statistics cited in May, 201.
[88] Ibid., 203.
[89] For a discussion of the widespread assumption that women were the family's "purchasing agents" who did 85% of all consumer shopping, see Marchand, 66-9. For more than a generation the film industry has largely made the opposite assumption, targeting teen-age boys in what is called the "Peter Pan syndrome," see Richard Maltby and Melvyn Stokes, *Hollywood Cinema* (Oxford: Blackwell Publishers, Ltd., 1995), 10, 221.
[90] Elsie deWolfe, *The House in Good Taste* (New York: The Century Company, 1915), 3. On deWolfe's career see, Jane S. Smith, *Elsie deWolfe* (New York: Atheneum, 1982);

first professional, celebrity interior designer, inspired women to replace the somber clutter of Victorian homes with a "modern house" filled with sunshine, chintz, and a style that reflected the individual "personality of the mistress."[91] Aesthetic goods were valued for the quality of experience they offered and for how they promised to confirm a certain idea of the purchaser to herself: this was a woman capable of creative expression; here was a woman who valued her fantasies and desires. Such a woman, deWolfe declared, could "transform the things we have into a semblance of our ideal."

In the early twentieth century, women played pioneering and significant roles in new businesses built around beauty, taste, and style: the cosmetic industry, the fashion industry, the interior design industry, and early Hollywood, the glamour industry.[92] Stereotypes that had designated the expertise and interests associated with them as peculiarly feminine facilitated some women's pioneering professional roles even as they restricted their chances elsewhere. The glamorous strategies associated with the rise of consumer culture encouraged some women's troublesome new self-fashioning pleasures even as it limited the horizons of their dreams. "While men still shaped the world, it was

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Stanley Abercrombie, *A Century of Interior Design* (New York: Rizzoli, 2003), 22, 31, 41-5.

[91] DeWolfe, *The House in Good Taste*, 4-5. DeWolfe forthright declared houses belonged to women, noting, "And we take it for granted that this American home is always the woman's home" since "men are forever guests in our homes."

[92] On black and white women's development of the cosmetics industry between 1890 and 1920, see Kathy Peiss, *Hope in a Jar* (New York: Henry Holt, 1998). On the entrance of women fashion designers in this period, see Hollander, 134-6; On department stores, see William R. Leach, "Transformations in a Culture of Consumption," *The Journal of American History* 71. 2 (1984): 319-41.

the women who shaped the style in which we live," declared deWolfe in a statement that addressed both the limitations and possibilities of her day.[93]

Gloria Swanson thought "the world of 1916"—the year she left her hometown of Chicago for Los Angeles—not just "a man's world," but a "business run entirely by men."[94] Upon her arrival, Swanson signed as a featured player with Mack Sennett, the king of slapstick comedy. But the actress quickly feared "succeeding too well" at Sennett's Keystone studio, where an actress typically played a "dumb little cutie serving as a foil to the broadest slapstick comedians in the world," "having her skirts lifted and dodging flying bricks."[95] So Swanson quit Keystone in 1917, shortly after quitting her first, miserable marriage.[96] Unhappy and unemployed, her autobiography claimed that to escape her blues she put "every cent" in her purse and set off for "the new Los Angeles department stores."[97] According to Swanson, the purchase of a "bottle-green suit with a squirrel collar" and a "perfect fit" "seemed in a minute to wipe out the last six months of my life." She credited the new costume with performing another magical act: it gave her the confidence and attitude to reverse her luck and land a part in a society drama. It is impossible to know whether Swanson's tale is apocryphal. But certainly she would not have been the first actress to understand how the right costume could transport one into a

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[93] De Wolfe quoted in, Alfred Alan Lewis, *Ladies and Not-So-Gentle-Women* (New York: Viking, 2000), 283.
[94] Swanson, 63.
[95] On her career at Keystone, see Basinger, 207; Mack Sennett with Cameron Shipp, *King of Comedy* (San Francisco: Mercury House, 1990, rpt. 1954), 171-3. Sennett confirms Swanson's assessment of the role that women were relegated to in slapstick when discussing the dissatisfaction of his beloved Mabel Normand, 194
[96] The American king of slapstick called her "the most famous actress" to start with him and conceded "her dramatic talents and beauty were so outstanding" that mere "comedy merchants" couldn't keep her, Sennett, 172.
[97] Swanson., 81.

different mood. Nor would she have been the first, or the last, woman to take refuge in the women's world of shopping to employ a little retail therapy. Certainly, if the average woman was not aware of these "feminine" strategies to survive in "a man's world," the films Swanson would star in over the twenties would teach her. [98] In any event, the part in the society picture garnered Swanson her first featured piece in *Photoplay*, "Gloria Glorified."[99] "Swanson graduated from light comedy to drama," the article proclaimed, displaying the actress's evaluation of the pecking order among actresses was correct.[100]

At a dinner with Clara Kimball Young soon afterward, Swanson encountered a model that suggested what was possible for a woman of great style and ambition in early Hollywood. One of the first actresses to create her own production company, Young's seeming command over every detail of her life amazed Swanson. "In what other business," she wondered, "could this delightful elegant creature be completely independent," not just "turning out her own pictures," but "dealing with men as her equals, being able to use her brains as well as her beauty, having total say as to what stories she played in, who designed her clothes, and who her director and leading man would be."[101] Swanson's admiration for Young said something about what her own glamorous image promised her female fans. A woman made of equal parts style and authority might become the mistress of any situation with the power to construct her own story line, including the right man. Such a performance required one quality emphasized

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[98] On the development of the shopping-as-transformation trope in films in the 1920s, see Ryan, 505-6.
[99] "Gloria Glorified," *Photoplay* (August 1918): 28. The film was *You Can't Believe Everything* (Triangle 1917).
[100] "Gloria Glorified," *Photoplay*, 28.
[101] Swanson, 135.

in both Swanson's films and press: courage.[102] According to *Photoplay*, Swanson's whole career began from "a dare" that "aroused her fighting blood. "'I wanted to see if it was possible…if these others had something I didn't have.'"[103] "She has *Courage*," Elinor Glyn declared, "she knows no fear!"[104] "Imagine what it meant to go down in that among the lions," Glyn continued, referencing *Male and Female*, the film that launched her star in 1919. In it, Swanson moved from an English Lady lounging in gowns to a scantily clad Artemis-like huntress after a shipwreck proves her the naturally superior counterpart to her ex-butler. Swanson also demonstrated courage by taking controversial positions in her press. "I not only believe in divorce,"she announced in *Motion Picture*, "I sometimes think I don't believe in marriage at all."[105] Swanson's personality emphasized that a glamorous woman had to possess not only the high self-regard that made it possible to turn heads, but also the willingness to put up a fight for what she wanted. As one critic put it, "Gloria bobs and rouges and lingeries, yet always defeats the villain's ends—even if he supplied her with the rouge and the lingerie."[106]

Swanson learned much about the glamorous management of personality from Elinor Glyn, the person she most credited for shaping her performance. DeMille thought

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[102] See for instance, Gloria Swanson's studio press biography, "Blue Book of the Screen" for 1924, Gloria Swanson Core Clipping File, (hereafter GS File), AMPAS.
[103] "Gloria Glorified," *Photoplay*, 28.
[104] Glyn, "A Photobiography," *Photoplay*, 24.
[105] Gloria Swanson, "Gloria Swanson Talks on Divorce," *Motion Picture* (December, 1919): n.p., Gloria Swanson clippings file, AMPAS. See also, "Intolerance Blamed for Divorce," *San Francisco Bulletin*, April 23, 1920, 3. Swanson again states her support of divorce in this interview.
[106] Howe, "Is Mary Pickford," *The Preview*, 11.

Glyn "deserved more credit than I for inventing sex-appeal."[107] To compete with Goldwyn's promotion of "Eminent Authors" like Yezierska, Lasky wooed a cadre of well known writers like Glyn to work at FPL/Paramount.[108] Brought over from England to script and supervise the first vehicle built solely around Swanson's personality, Lasky thought Glyn was already "as adept as Salvador Dali at drawing attention to herself" upon her 1920 arrival. Glyn had learned the hard way how essential a glamorous image is to protecting a woman attempting to talk about sex with the publication of her sixth novel, *Three Weeks.* An international best-seller published in 1907, *Three Weeks* told the tale of an older, "intensely soignee," and very married Slavic Lady's efforts to play Pygmalion to "'a great, big, beautiful baby'" Englishman named Paul.[109] With only a three week vacation to transform the youth into her ideal lover, the Lady gives Paul a crash course education of the senses, teaching him to reject his "English conventionalities" and learn how to Love.[110] "'Love is tangible—it means to be close—close—to be clasped—to be touching—to be One!'"[111] Love requires a full-time commitment to a partner's delight, fantastic attention to details like providing tiger-skin rugs on which to lounge, and elicits a woman's complete surrender when properly performed. "'A woman will stand almost anything from a passionate lover,'" Glyn's

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[107] DeMille, 231. Goldwyn made a similar pronouncement, claiming, "Elinor Glyn is synonymous with the discovery of sex-appeal in cinema," Anthony Dawson, *Elinor Glyn* (Garden City, NY, 1955), 279.
[108] Lasky, 140
[109] Quotes, Elinor Glyn, *Three Weeks* (New York: Duffield Company, 1907), 124; 51. Sales in Great Britain, the British Empire, and American reached two million by 1916. In 1917, three separate publishers released cheap editions causing the total number sold by 1933 to reach five million. The book was also immediately published in every European language. Anthony Glyn, *Elinor Glyn*, 126; Frank Luther Mott, *Golden Multitudes* (New York & London: R. R. Bowker Co., 1947), 249-51,312.
[110] Glyn, *Three Weeks*, 177, 55
[111] Ibid., 80; 109-10

Lady promises.[112] After much teasing and teaching of technique on the tiger skin rug, the Lady orchestrates "their wedding night" in an exoticized, orientalist setting "fit for the Favorite in a harem."[113] "'By foolish laws we are sinning,'" she tells her besotted lover afterward, "'and you would be more nobly employed yawning with some bony English miss for your wife—and I by the side of a mad drunken husband.'"[114] The Lady rejects the custom that "'a moral woman'" must stay "'the faithful beast of burden to one man,'" proposing instead another code: "'to live a life with one's own love, if it engenders the most lofty aspirations, that to me is highly moral and good.'"

Although Glyn called herself "the first writer to dare openly to glorify the joys of earthy love," she was actually one of the first *female* writers to glorify a woman as erotic mistress, suggesting that, rather than being men's passive pupils, the Ladies should teach men about the art of love.[115] Such a stance violated Anglo-American social conventions about sexuality that taught "the girl repression, the boy expression," as one doctor explained, "not simply by word and book, but the lessons are graven into their very being by all the traditions, prejudices, and customs of society."[116] Pilloried in much of the press, women novelists and their female readership were held accountable for riding the "Scarlet-crested Elinor Glyn wave" that followed.[117] British critics charged that this

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[112] Ibid., 77, 157
[113] Ibid., 106.
[114] Ibid., 194.
[115] Elinor Glyn, *Romantic Adventure; The Autobiography of Elinor Glyn* (New York: E. P. Dutton & Co., 1937), 131.
[116] Quoted in D'Emilio and Freedman, 179.
[117] George Jean Nathan, "The Girl-Alone-in-the-City Novels," *The Bookman* (April 1911): APS Online 202.

"Fleshy School of Fiction" was "naturalizing" continental attitudes toward romance.[118] "Readers—chiefly women—who make the fortune of English fiction," threatened to supplant "the splendidly wise and tender-hearted tradition of Scott, Dickens, and Thackeray" with "garbage spread out in the sun by imitators of the erotic, absinthe-drenched, nerve-racked decadents who swarm about Paris cafes." An American critic who thought Glyn the most shocking example of the trend, wondered "Why is it that when women writers of the modern school deal with passion, they succeed only in 'nastifying it?'"[119] As we have seen, the charge duplicated earlier accusations about the degenerating effects of immoral melodramas on the legitimate stage, suggesting most male critics continued to prefer "melodramas of beset manhood."[120]

Glyn's autobiography offered an explanation for her turn to the passionate melodramas that later appealed to the fans who devoured Hollywood's postwar products. A notable, red haired beauty who married a country gentleman at twenty-seven out of financial necessity, Glyn landed in a misalliance: the older, good-humored husband interested in drink, hunting, travel on the Empire's edges and the company of other men, the romantic younger wife in literature, art, conversation and fashionable city-life.[121] The

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[118] "Why Do Women Write More Bad Books than Men?" *Current Literature* (January 1908): APS Online 45.
[119] "Three Weeks," *Current Literature* (December 1907): APS Online 693. On this trend in American fiction, see also Mott, *Golden Multitudes*, 248-9.
[120] On the earlier trends, see chapter two, 68. Nina Baym, "Melodramas of Best Manhood," in Lucy Maddox, ed., *Locating American Studies* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1999), 215-31. Originally published in *American Quarterly* 33.2 (1981). The author uses the term as shorthand for how male critics defined the best literature as involving men struggling against the natural world and the constraints of society, both of which were coded as feminine. Baym argues this gender bias helps to explain why women writers were excluded from the literary canon.
[121] My description comes from Glyn, *Romantic Adventure*, 128-38; Joan Hardwick, *Addicted to Romance* (London: Andre Deutsch Ltd., 1994), 53-78.

marriage and her fashion flair provided Glyn the social access she sought, but "her romantic temperament craved for a lover."[122] When bankruptcy threatened the spendthrift couple, the life-long diarist turned to her pen to support the family. Published when Glyn was forty-two, Glyn's sixth novel represented a break from her previous novels of manners. Glyn called *Three Weeks* "an escape from the limitations and deprivations of my married life" springing from "unsatisfied longings for a sympathetic companion." Though "outwardly controlled," the book was a "fierce rebellion," "the syren" inside "venting itself in the passionate writings...My imagination was roused not by possession and its joys, but by a longing for them." Shunned by much of the upper class society in which she moved, the book stalled the climb of this self-described "social pioneer" in England, but its bestseller status indicated another path along which she might advance.[123] Glyn assumed what she called the "role of 'Elinor Glyn the famous authoress,'" a "pioneer in the cause of feminine emancipation" working "to free the souls and bodies of women from the heavy age-old trammels of custom and convention."

Glyn's performance as a glamorous, cosmopolitan authoress anticipated many of the strategies used to legitimate, and to sell, the personalities of stars like Swanson. The enthusiasm of women readers for the authoress, and her heroines, scandalized many by indicating their interest in erotica, but still she "glamoured [sic] over" their interest with the "'holiness of love.'"[124] Glyn used more than non-marital true "Love" to justify her writing and performances. Following her heroine's template, the "authoress" she presented to the U.S. press was part exotic, Slavic purple-gowned seductress, part real-

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[122] Glyn, *Romantic Adventure*, 128-9.
[123] Ibid., 131-2, 8.
[124] "Three Weeks," *Current Literature*, 693.

life Lady of devastating refinement. Knowing Americans weakness for a title, she insisted on being called "Madame" Glyn.[125] The advice of the "dollar princess" who schooled the author on her crossing to America Glyn proved correct: the US press and its readers granted a wider berth to unconventional views cloaked as the continental romanticism of an aristocratic rebel.[126] "Her main complaint about America is that life here lacks the color and tone that effloresces in 'Three Weeks,'" wrote a critic who agreed that life at home was "emotionally drab and lacking in the esthetic values that are the gift of the continental temperament."[127] In short, a good dose of Old World superiority smoothed her reception as a cosmopolitan romantic, excusing her unconventional conduct as a search for a world of perfect Beauty.[128] Certainly the performance also translated into increased sales.[129]

If Glyn's aristocratic continental glamour helped to invest stories about women's passionate cravings with the aura of romantic art, she also liberally employed an Orientalist idiom in her wares. By the nineteen-tens conjuring the "East" through Orientalism was a well established trope in imperial nations of the "West."[130] Orientalism depicted actual peoples from the Middle East and Asia as a permanently unknowable and foreign "Eastern" mass with dangerously passionate, secretive, feminized natures.

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[125] Hardwick, 128-9, 211
[126] Glyn *Romantic Adventure*, 139; Hardwick, 127-133.
[127] "Elizabeth Visits America," *Current Literature* (August 1909): APS Online 223.
[128] Here I follow the idea of romanticism found in Colin Campbell, "Understanding traditional and modern practices of consumption in eighteenth century England: a character-action approach," chap. 3 in Brewer and Porter eds. See also, Colin Campbell, *The Romantic Ethic and the Spirit of Modern Consumerism* (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1987), pt. I.
[129] For a discussion of New York's press and readers' fondness for these performances, see M.H. Dunlop, *Gilded City* (New York: Harper Collins, 2000).
[130] Edward Said, *Orientalism* (New York: Vintage, 1978).

Orientalist stereotypes helped to justify Anglo-American imperialism as a "civilizing" paternalistic mission and the restriction, or outright exclusion, of Chinese and Japanese immigrants to the United States as necessary protection. Orientalism also offered a means for the West to use the East to unleash its "uncivilized" romantic desires and, as such, had come to shape the merchandising of a vast array of consumer goods aimed at audiences of all sorts, as well as a number of high art cultural performances.[131]

Glyn's use of Orientalism may have accounted for why, according to critics, her popularity with women stretched across the class spectrum, uniting Judy O'Grady and the Colonel's Lady precisely as the movie industry hoped to do by 1921.[132] With hair dyed "the color of red ink," "slanting eyes" and a "red, red, mouth" her presentation in the press was that of a 'very, very well connected" "old citizen of the world" who simultaneously "looked very much like one of her heroines," like "an absolutely fantastic 'houri.'"[133] Only within the context of the Western fantasy of Orientalism might the press market this fifty-six year old Englishwoman in the part of houri: one of the beautiful, young virgins who awaited devout Muslim men in paradise. Increasingly,

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[131] On Orientalism in film, see Matthew Bernstein and Gaylyn Studlar, eds., *Visions of the East* (New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 1997). In advertising, see Dunlop, 59, 96-8, 100-4; William Leach, *Land of Desire* (New York: Vintage, 1993), 104-11. For its role in the development of modern dance and women's broader freedom of movement, see Judith Walkowitz, "The 'Vision of Salome': Cosmopolitianism and Erotic Dancing in Central London, 1900-1918," *Journal of American History* 108. 2 (April 2003): 337-76; Elizabeth Kendall, *Where She Danced* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1979).

[132] Walter S. Trumbull, "Served Her Right," *Lippincott's Monthly Magazine* (May 1908): APS Online 696; *Current Opinion*, "Lite Ratu Re An D-Art," (May 1916): APS Online 346; M.E. Ravage, "I Laugh As I Think," *Puck* (January 20, 1917): APS Online, 16; George Jean Nathan, "What the Public Wants," *McClure's Magazine* (November 1917): APS Online 16.

[133] Delight Evans, "Tiger Skins and Temperament," *Photoplay* (January 1921): 70, 120; Elinor Glyn, "In Filmdom's Boudoir," *Photoplay* (March 1921): 29; Glyn, *Romantic Adventure*, 139.

Glyn's use of the Orientalist idiom in her writing and self-presentation became a key element in what made her not just "good copy," in studio parlance, but a believable cosmopolitan guide to the consumption of products that valued the pursuit of passionate pleasures.

Hollywood's importation of Glyn signaled the industry's interest in pursuing not just new domestic markets, but markets around the world. Having "cast aside its swaddling clothes and prepared itself for a world existence," one *Photoplay* article declared that the "period of conquest" inaugurating the "Golden Age of Pictures" had begun.[134] And in "Madame" Glyn, Hollywood found a continental bearer of orientalized glamour whose credentials could not be beat, making her an ideal representative of the industry's imperial post-war turn. Glyn set the stage for this performance upon arrival, emptying her suite at the Hollywood Hotel of its modern furniture and filling the room with scarlet drapes, velvet divans, silk purple pillows, tarot cards, and crystal balls so that it appeared to Swanson like a "Persian tent."[135] The first writer to interview Glyn for *Photoplay* featured these surroundings as prominently as the author herself. "Tiger Skins and Temperament" had Glyn stretched out upon a tiger skin she claimed to have picked up in India, dipped in scent proffered by an Egyptian fan, and surrounded by portraits that included her sister—"Lucile—Lady Duff Gordon—the most celebrated modiste of two

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[134] O.R. Geyer, "The Golden Age of Pictures," *Photoplay* (June 1920): 53. The article describes the 300% increase in foreign trade between 1916-19, declaring it a result of the industry proving to Europe and South America that "Americans were not so awfully busy chasing dollars that they were not able to keep abreast of the times insofar as fashion and other matters were concerned," 54. Unsurprisingly, press commentary outside the industry recorded that Europeans did not consider this a "golden" development, see "American Films Corrupting Britain," *The Literary Digest* (December 4, 1920): 34-5.
[135] Swanson, 159.

continents"—and an assortment of royal friends.[136] Glyn's surroundings, then, communicated the author's status as authentic daughter of the Empire, emphasizing the "privileged mobility" a cosmopolitan personage commanded.[137] Glyn lived in "London and Versailles," had "travelled (sic.) almost everywhere," managing even to present her daughters at the English court before racing to Paris to act one of the lone female witnesses to the treaty signing that ended the Great War.[138] Ultimately, her presentation underscored one point: her Oriental glamour was no act. "I have not had such a thrill since I went to see Theda Bara," the writer confessed, "And Madame Glyn…out-Baras Miss Bara. Because Miss Glyn is really Miss Glyn while Theda is Theodosia Goodman, if you get what I mean."

After establishing her credentials as an authentic continental bearer of Oriental glamour, Glyn's declared her mission "to set fashion on its ear, not follow it" by teaching the industry and its fans how to distinguish real "sex appeal" from the ersatz version popularized in pictures.[139] This description of Glyn's efforts by Swanson probably would have appalled her mentor. At least in public, Glyn never employed so obvious a term as "sex appeal," an expression devoid of the special brand of European artistry she was looking to sell. Glyn spoke of "it" instead of sex, of "the strange magnetism that attracts both sexes," the decidedly, natural, unselfconscious quality exuded by "tigers and cats—

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[136] Evans, "Tiger Skins," *Photoplay*, 70; Glyn, "In Filmdom's Budoir," *Photoplay*, 29; On Glyn's sister, the clothing designer Lucile, Lady Duff Gordon, see Meredith Etherington-Smith, *The "It" Girls* (London: H. Hamilton, 1986); Lady Duff Gordon, *Discretions and Indiscretions* (London: Jarrolds, 1932).
[137] Walkowitz, "The 'Vision of Salome,'" *Journal of American History*, 340.
[138] Evans, "Tiger Skins," *Photoplay*, 70-1, 120.
[139] Swanson, 160.

both animals being fascinating and mysterious, and quite unbiddable."[140] Glyn created a sensation telling the press how Hollywood's product and personalities simply did not, as yet, have it.[141] The hair, clothes, and comportment of most Hollywood actresses, she declared, lacked the "Paris look" and true "chic," revealing a larger problem. Except for Swanson, whose "not altogether occidental eyes" revealed her "old soul," the movies' heroines were mostly ingénues who lacked adult glamour.[142]

With casting approval over the male lead in *The Great Moment*, Glyn conducted a search to find the right actor that partially explained the absence of adult female sensuality on screens.[143] Billed as "the vivid drama of a society girl with a gypsy's heart, and the romantic adventures into which her untamed nature led her" the part required an actor with enough magnetism to pull off a scene in which he sucks rattlesnake poison out of Swanson's breast—a display that ultimately convinces the wayward heroine to settle down.[144] Glyn judged star after male star unfit. Declaring American men "could simply not make love," she despaired of finding an actor capable of treating his leading lady differently than his "his aunts or sisters."[145] The search was partially a publicity device. But Glyn exposed a truth as well: sexually expressive men on screens were typically villains played by "swarthy" new immigrants or even "genuine" "Orientals" like the Japanese star Sessue Hayakawa.[146] The most successful leading men were "good

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[140] Anthony Glyn, 302.
[141] Glyn, "In Filmdom's Boudoir," *Photoplay*, 29.
[142] Glyn, "A Photobiography," *Photoplay*, 24.
[143] On Glyn's casting approval, see Lasky, 141-3.
[144] *Exhibitors Herald* (July 9, 1921): 5.
[145] Glyn, *Romantic Adventure*, 299; Lasky, 142.
[146] For an overview of his career, see "Sessue Hayakawa," *Films in Review* 27.4 (1976): 193-208. For one of his earliest hits that contrasted his dangerous, magnetic sexuality to

natured, big brother types," exuding the kind of boy-next-door, "Arrow Collar" masculine charm that like stars Douglas Fairbanks and Wallace Reid epitomized.[147] *The Great Moment*'s success vindicated Glyn's opinion that audiences wanted to see more daring contests of passion between men and women. "The public doesn't seem to be able to get enough of Elinor Glyn's first story for the screen," declared one reviewer.[148] "It's a picture that will cause talk," *The Exhibitors Herald* predicted.[149] Its "several daring situations" "will certainly please the women" and Swanson's performance as "a temperamental English Girl who breaks the bonds of English conventionality to live her own life, as her Romany ancestors did before her" justified her elevation to "stardom."[150]

"In Filmdom's Boudoir," an article in *Photoplay*, Glyn asserted that the same Anglo-American moral conventions that bound most prevented Hollywood's personalities from expressing "it."[151] To become artists capable of granting audiences access to exotic pleasures they needed to embrace European romantic ideals that allowed for unfettered self expression. "In my beloved Paris, which is the center of Art, whether right or wrong from a conventional point of view—artists do not think highly of Matrimony," Glyn explained. Marriage prevented artists from acquiring the "experience"

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an American man's an asexual persona, see *The Cheat* (Jesse L. Lasky Feature Play Co. 1915).

[147] Lasky, *I Blow My Own Horn*, 146. On Reid as heir to the "Arrow Collar" tradition, see Koszarski, 276-8; Gaylyn Studlar, *This Mad Masquerade* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1996), 191.

[148] "'The Great Moment' Hit at Alhambra," *Los Angeles Daily Times*, October 5, 1921, pt. III, 2. *The Great Moment* (Paramount 1921).

[149] *Exhibitors Herald* (August 6, 1921): 46.

[150] Review of "The Great Moment," *Exhibitors Herald* (August 6, 1921): 49. Many individual exhibitors wrote into the "What the Picture did for Me" section of the trade paper praising Swanson and the film's success with the ladies, see for instance, March 11, 1922, 75; March 25, 1922, 75; April 1, 1922, 70; April 15, 1922, 80.

[151] Glyn, "Filmdom's Boudoir," *Photoplay*, 28-30. All quotes, Ibid.

necessary to their craft, she avowed, wondering how many "foolish, ordinary" wives and "boring, exacting" husbands had stultified their partner's development. Although Glyn conceded that divorce laws in America did make the "possibility of a fairly frequent change of partners" a choice for Hollywood's artists, she still thought it "more sensible" for movie stars to devote themselves to art and put off marriage until their reigns ended.

Glyn's comments amplified the debate already raging in *Photoplay* over what lessons Hollywood's product and personalities offered fans on women's changing sexual standards, what made a happy marriage, and how to interpret divorce. Of the dozen articles run on the subject between 1920 and 1921, a two-part interview with DeMille stood most outside the typical opinions proffered and consequently created the biggest stir.[152] In "What Does Marriage Mean?" DeMille declared that the whole purpose of his "sex pictures" was to prevent divorce, neatly reversing the conventional attack they encouraged audiences to treat divorce and infidelity lightly.[153] According to the director, the films illustrated the Biblical injunction "'She that is married, careth how she please her husband,'" by teaching wives the importance of staying attractive and of allowing husbands to retain their personal freedom after marriage.[154] Offering readers a demonstration of his theories, DeMille stated "in eighteen years I have never passed a Saturday night at home. I have never said where I was on a Saturday night…And in

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[152] As Told by Cecil B. DeMille to Adela Rogers St. Johns, "What Does Marriage Mean?" *Photoplay* (December 1920): 28-31; As Told by Cecil B. DeMille to Adela Rogers St. Johns, "More About Marriage," *Photoplay* (May 1921):24-6, 105.
[153] For criticisms of the *The Affairs of Anatol* that charged the opposite, see "Great cast. Great director. Great scenery. Absolutely teaches no moral lesson whatsoever," *Exhibitors Herald* (April 1, 1922):70; "If dissatisfied wives were guided by the argument of 'Don't Change Your Husband,' the divorce courts would be more crowded than they are now," *The New York Times Film Reviews* (New York: Arno Press, 1970), February 3, 1919.
[154] St. Johns, "What Does Marriage Mean," *Photoplay*, 28-31.

eighteen years *I have never been asked*." DeMille's claim that his pictures displayed stars who dressed up stereotypically Victorian gender conventions in modern garb prompted such an outcry from *Photoplay*'s readers that he revisited the subject in "More About Marriage."[155] To the many readers who demanded whether he afforded his wife "the same privileges of personal freedom," DeMille replied "Of course, of course! It never occurred to me that such a question could arise." Yet, DeMille immediately returned to his original point, using the sexual double standard to explain why he held up a "broad, wise, pure, understanding" wife whose "love and purity" helped her husband "to overcome the Adamic inheritance of lust and dust that eventually lead to ruin."

Perhaps the director believed his sex films films, at heart, merely instructed women in how to put updated, new woman exteriors over traditional interiors.[156] The terms of his own marriage and the fact that Lasky had pressured him to make the movies suggests the director felt little affinity for the kinds of marital experimentations they displayed. But the overwhelmingly "violent denunciations" of *Photoplay* readers suggested this was not the message fans had received.[157] Indeed, when placed in the larger context of stories printed in the magazine, it is easy to conclude that readers were given the impression that Hollywood's personalities were redefining modern marriage along more, not less, egalitarian lines.[158] An article about an actress who had starred in DeMille's first "sex picture," *Old Wives for New*, made this point in a re-appropriation of

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[155] St. Johns, "More About Marriage," *Photoplay*, 24-6, 105. DeMille claimed he "received more letters concerning the publication" of the first interview "than from any picture he had made."
[156] This is Higashi's argument in "The New Woman and Consumer Culture," 305-14.
[157] St. Johns, "More About Marriage," *Photoplay*, 24.
[158] Of the twelve stories that I read on the topic between 1919 and 1921, DeMille was only one with this point of view.

the title: "Old Lives For New; Florence Vidor demonstrates that the New Woman may do justice to both a home and a career."[159] Despite the "old ideals implanted by her southern ancestresses" that taught a wife and mother must stay at home, Vidor now thought that a woman with "a real, deep undeniable craving for a form of self expression does more for her family by answering that call and working out her happiness than denying it."[160] Vidor modeled a New Wife driven by multiple, reinforcing passions—for home, husband, child, and work—who needed a new kind of life.

Yet even as the magazine characterized Vidor as an average modern woman with typical problems, the premium her talent placed on "self-expression" suggested how actresses might act as avatars of special domestic arrangements. Most of early Hollywood's working wives reversed Glyn's dictum about the incompatibility of art and domesticity, using art's demands to legitimate their desire for unconventional domestic arrangement. "How a Stage or Screen Marriage Can Be Made Happy," an interview with actress Marjorie Rambeau, elaborated precisely this point.[161] The article began with an attempt to draw readers into the conversation as equals, emphasizing how all women shared the same emotions given that "'the Colonel's lady and Judy O'Grady are sisters under the skin.'" Yet Rambeau asserted that actresses' marriages were "the happiest in the world" because they lived by different conventions than their sisters. Espousing the creed of the romantic ideal of behavior, Rambeau declared that, above all else, "creators

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[159] Joan Jordan, "Old Lives for New," *Photoplay* (April 1921): 44-6. Vidor, the wife of director King Vidor, offered these views outside of the fan magazines too, see Florence Vidor, "Does Marriage Help or Hurt a Movie Star?" *Chicago Herald and Examiner,* October 2, 1921, pt. V, p. 8.

[160] Jordan, "Old Lives for New," *Photoplay*, 44, 46

[161] Marjorie Rambeau as "told to" Ada Patterson, "How Can a Stage or Screen Marriage Can Be Made Happy," *Photoplay* (February 1921): 32-3, 105. All quotes in paragraph, Ibid.

of character" valued their individuality. "Without a doubt we are more articulate. What we feel we put into speech. And we do not mince that speech." While "the rule of the laywoman's life is to repress—repress—repress. The rule of the actress is to express—express—always express." Rambeau explained that artists' ethic demanded women's forthrightness, fostering true understanding between partners. Shared work provided "a never ceasing topic" that "fused" the interests of husband and wife. Most dramatically, it also supported a reversal of gender roles illustrated by her husband's decision to play her muse. "I shall devote my life to you," the actress claimed he had declared. "We will do whatever is best for your talent. I shall think of but one career. That is yours," leaving Rambeau with "what every woman wants, a deep, lasting, selfless love."

A roundtable discussion in which "the most notable artists of the screen" replied to "Madame Elinor Glyn, the world-famous English authoress and authority on love and marriage" as to whether the "motion picture star—being artists—should not marry" echoed similar, if less exalted, views.[162] Entitled, "What They Think About Marriage!" the dozen women interviewed typically placed the burden not on the demands of art, but on whether husbands would accept and support their wife's work. "Choose your husband well!" advised Constance Talmadge, echoing the tenor of most Hollywood wives' advice. Norma Talamadge thought it "entirely possible to have a happy home life and a career at the same time"—as long as a woman picked a "sympathetic" husband who tried "sincerely to aid his wife in her profession." Always the non-conformist in her personal

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[162] "What They Think About Marriage!" *Photoplay* (April 1921): 20-22, 110. All quotes in paragraph, Ibid. Those interviewed included: DeMille; Swanson; George Fitzmaurice; Will Rodgers; Frances Marion; Pearl White; Marshall Neilan; Thomas Meighan; Norma Talmade; Constance Talmadge; Mae Murray; William S. Hart; Anita Stewart; Antonio Moreno; Justine Johnstone.

life, Swanson's comments sounded a different theme, declaring motherhood the essential experience necessary to the female artist. "If motherhood without marriage were possible," the actress claimed she would "dispense with marriage. Since it is not, marriage is the only alternative." Most of the Hollywood wives interviewed followed Frances Marion's redefinition of a "true marriage." Matrimony was no longer simply "a ritual," but a relationship governed by "love and understanding" that "should do away with all the deadening effects" of past customs, including those that prevented a wife from giving "all that is best in her to her profession." Now husbands and wives might "work together and play together, have a happy home and get along splendidly." The higher call of art, then, facilitated Hollywood wives' abilities to throw off the higher law of religious strictures and gender conventions to create new kinds of marriages.

The counsel of Hollywood wives prefigured some of the values and behavior associated with the ideal of "companionate marriage" that would take hold later in the twenties among the urban middle class.[163] To the progressive social scientists who popularized the term, soaring divorce rates, the agitation for birth control, and women's participation in the youth revolt all indicated a decline in older marital ideals based on obligation, self-sacrifice, and an asexual spiritual union.[164] To give marriage new purpose, it sought to redesign marital relationships along more democratic lines, emphasizing emotional compatibility and shared interests for husband and wife. Early Hollywood's wives only hinted at some of its other goals—goals elaborated in sex

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[163] Ben Lindsey and Wainwright Evans, *The Companionate Marriage* (New York: Boni and Liveright, 1927).

[164] By understanding of "companionate marriage" follows that found in, Fass, 39-40, 50, 79; D'Emilio and Freedman, 241, 244, 265-70, 273; Christina Simmons, "Modern Sexuality and the Myth of Victorian Repression," in Barbara Melosh, ed., *Gender and History Since 1890* (London: Routledge, 1993).

pictures drawing fire. It enshrined emotional chemistry and mutual sexual satisfaction as the hallmark of a good marriage, requiring the acceptance of birth control and a re-envisioning of the meaning of sex and of women's sexuality. "To be strongly sexed," wrote Margaret Sanger, a leading activist to make birth control accessible, "means that the life force can suffuse and radiate through body and soul. It means radiant energy and force in every field of endeavor."[165] Companionate marriage jettisoned Victorian assertions that sex was a life sapping force that required wives to regulate their husband's dangerous libidos in the name of a higher moral struggle. Now, this view of the affect of sexual fulfillment swung out in the other direction, figuring it as a necessary good for all and asking that sexually adroit husbands cultivate wives' different, but no less powerful desires. Designed to stabilize the family, it accepted erotic exploration, or "petting," before marriage, but reserved the full delights of sex for marriage. Sex was to "intensify, beautify, and consecrate love," facilitating "the sexualization of love and the glorification of sex."[166]

With critical modifications, Hollywood's stars, products, and fan culture sold its audience new norms regarding sexuality, sex roles, and marriage that would later become a standard part of the dominant discourse which historians have called "sexual liberalism."[167] Here lay an instance of how life imitated art, as Oscar Wilde liked to say. A mountain of sociological studies conducted in the late twenties and thirties attested to the growing importance of celebrities as role models to youths coming of age in the

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[165] Margaret Sanger, *Happiness in Marriage* (New York: Bretanos, 1926), 21, 48.
[166] Fass, 75.
[167] The term is D'Emilio's and Freedman's, 239-274. The authors date the emergence of this term to this period, and define it as a sexual system which divorced sex from procreation, and affirmed heterosexual pleasure as both a value in itself and as a critical component of successful marriages.

country's first peer culture.[168] Over the course of the twenties, movie stars supplanted political and business leaders as the individuals youths most admired.[169] Particularly in relationship to norms regarding sex roles and romance, women stars, on-screen and off, offered their female fans a means to observe, appreciate and justify new approaches to romance and relationships that sanctioned their curiosity to explore sensual pleasures and to find husbands who took pains to satisfy their emotional needs. Tellingly, the industry's products and personalities ignored the centrality of birth control to the practice of this ethic, treating contraception as a taboo the media maintains until this day.

The fan discourse surrounding the subject of how to interpret the impact that careers had upon the marriages of early Hollywood's working wives provided the most radical point of departure from the ethic.[170] Companionate marriage promised women democratic reforms only within the context of marriage, depicting matrimony as the realm that would satisfy all their interests and needs.[171] Prospective marital partners learned that careers not only sapped wives' sensuality, but that it also injured the self-esteem of husbands by making them unsympathetic to their needs. Films typically

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[168] This was the overwhelming determination of the Payne Fund Studies, a University of Chicago based investigation into how films influenced youth that was conducted between 1928 and 1932. The research was published in eight volumes between 1933-5. Henry James Forman, *Our Movie Made Children* (New York: MacMillan, 1933) was a popularized version of the research that added an element of strong moral disapproval. The book became a best-seller, see Garth Jowett, Ian Jarvie, and Kathryn Fuller, eds., *Children and the Movies* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 1996), 1-14. See also Robert S. Lynd and Helen Merrell Lynd, *Middletown* (San Diego: A Harvest Book, 1929), 242, 263-7; Fred I. Greenstein, "New Light on Changing Values: A Forgotten Body of Survey Data," *Social Forces* 42.4 (1964): 441-50.

[169] Greenstein, "New Light on Changing Values," *Social Forces*, 445.

[170] On how white women's gainful employment became a centerpiece in the controversy surrounding modern women and feminism in the 1920s, see Nancy Cott, *The Grounding of Modern Feminism* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1987), chap. 6.

[171] Simmons, 29-3; Fass, 80-3.

projected such attitudes, again mirroring the expectations that most middle class white women and men coming of age would share. But the fan culture aimed at young women offered decidedly more complicated views. There readers often found female stars extolling how their careers demanded husbands' acceptance and loving support.[172] In this instance, early Hollywood's glamorous women workers truly set fashion on its ear.

Unsurprisingly, all but one of the male actors interviewed in *Photoplay*'s marriage roundtable dismissed the idea that combining marriage and artistic work presented any complication. Actor Antonio Moreno, however, sided with Glyn, arguing that no artist should marry. Moreno represented a new type of leading man: the Latin Lover. The Latin Lover suggested that American women and men were not yet ready to embrace the sexual ethic associated with companionate marriage. "Elinor Glyn is expressing the European point of view," concluded Moreno, "which I understand but many Americans will not."[173] Of course personalities like Glyn and Moreno were busy making sure that audiences understood the difference. "The glorification of romance," Glyn declared in her 1920 *The Philosophy of Love*, required teaching "American girls…a desire to be loved like European women are loved."[174] In the postwar period, Hollywood turned to praising the "strictly continental" methods "of making love" practiced by immigrants like

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[172] Dorothy Dix, "Domesticity on the Half Shell," *Los Angeles Times*, November 10, 1921, pt 2, 2. A syndicated advice columnist in newspapers and *The Ladies Home Journal*, Dix answered "a young business women's" query as to whether the marriage of a career woman could be as happy as one who "became a purely domestic wife." Dix said it depended on the family income, "the caliber of the man," and how much a woman cared for her profession, using actresses and business women as examples of women who could not be satisfied only "playing at domesticity."

[173] "What They Think About Marriage!" *Photoplay*, 22.

[174] Elinor Glyn, *The Philosophy of Love* (New York: Newnes, 1920).

Moreno as superior to those offered by their Anglo-American counterparts.[175] Even as the debate on immigration raged—a debate that placed the pollution of the nation's Anglo stock by foreign men at the center of the danger—the foreignness of Hollywood's lovers helped license the new eroticism on screens. New immigrant men en masse might be figured as dark outsiders threatening the nation's health. But Hollywood discovered that many found these same qualities were attractive when blown-up on screens.

In "The Techniques of Lovers," actress and producer Clara Kimball Young declared a co-star with "the foreign—Latin—technique" her "preference for a screen lover."[176] According to Young, American men were "naturally" too "impatient," "too egotistical" to understand that "love making" needed to be studied like an art. Temperamentally inclined to act the "carpenter" instead of the "artist," the American man "fusses and fumes over the least squeak in his automobile" yet was "satisfied with the commonest sort of mediocrity in his lovemaking." To Young, the superior technique of "Latins" lay in how they "set their women apart" to "study them in all their manifestations." American men simply did "not study woman" the star explained. Ultimately, Young placed much of the responsibility for this difference on how women and men in "Anglo-Saxon countries" treated one another as asexual "companions." "American women have demanded equality, and they deserve equality," but in that fight Young thought women had discouraged "men from studying them—as women." "Consequently," men assumed "women react to the same impulses and emotions as

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[175] Joan Jordan, "Confessions of a Modern Don Juan," *Photoplay* (May 1921): 46. For more on Moreno and the emergence of Latin Lover types, see Studlar, *This Mad Masquerade*, 178; Basinger, 303-4.

[176] Clara Kimball Young, "The Technique of Lovers," *Photoplay* (March 1920): 39-41. All quotes in this paragraph, Ibid.

themselves, and make love as they would want a woman to make love to them if the situation were reversed." Young's opinion suggested that women might need to act the part of Glyn's Lady—to speak-up and teach Anglo men what pleased them. Yet she complained about the difficulty of finding a man who knew how to make-love, on screen or off, to a female screenwriter and to *Photoplay*'s mostly women readers—not to the opposite sex.[177] One can only guess how difficult such advice might have been to follow for readers after a century of conditioning to the contrary. Luckily, Hollywood provided Young and her fans with an imaginative escape to the dilemma: a Latin Lover, a glamorous, magical, "handsome hero" with the power to intuit a woman's every wish and eyes that mesmerized her into becoming a heroine who could follow her desires.

In retrospect, the rise of the Latin Lover appears as a kind of bridge between two sexual ethics. Under his imaginative tutelage, American men and women might learn what it took to ignite a woman's sensuality so that, together, they could experience erotic bliss. The 1921 explosion of Rudolph Valentino—the actor who both defined and immortalized the type—also suggested that many American men and women were not ready, or willing, to view each other in such a light. Everything that made Valentino the ideal fantasy lover of millions accentuated his foreignness, his dark, exotic beauty, his sensual remove from conventional codes of masculinity. His first real job in the U.S. as a professional tango partner to middle class women set the stage for what made the actor such an appealing threat.[178] Lounge lizards and tango pirates, as men who performed

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[177] Lenore Coffee, *Storyline* (London: Cassell & Company Ltd, 1973), 43.

[178] For a discussion of his career as a dancer in New York, see the good biography by Emily Leider, *Dark Lover* (New York: Farrar, Straus, & Giroux, 2003), 4-60. For a discussion of how the period's ethnic and social-sexual tensions illustrated in the "dance craze" effected his reception, see Gaylyn Studlar, "'Optic Intoxication: Rudolph

such work were called, were stereotyped as immigrant, lower-class Italian and Jews who used "feminine" wiles—beauty, grace, and relentless focus on another's pleasure—to prey on women and escape the constraints of ethnic, sexual, and class norms.[179] But in the lead of *The Four Horsemen of the Apocalypse*, an adaptation of Victor Blasco Ibanez's international best-seller about the catastrophic costs of the Great War, these same qualities were transformed to reveal "the continental hero, the polished foreigner, the modern Don Juan" in Hollywood's "unsuspecting midst."[180] Valentino "tangos, makes love, and fights with equal grace," raved one of the many critics who singled out his performance, displaying how the actor combined previously incompatible attributes into a new masculine whole.[181] As Julio, Valentino grows from a dissolute heir of an Argentine ranching empire who moves to Paris to play at painting into a man driven to sacrifice himself for country by the ennobling effects of an adulterous love. Valentino embodied a new type of star: the man as lover, controlled by passion and circumstance, whose only guide was the pulse of his partner. Whether expertly dominating a lower-class woman in a languid, intricate tango executed in a smoke filled dive, or, oh, so delicately seducing a married, aristocratic one in his atelier, Valentino adjusted his style and tempo to deliver whatever his partner, and the situation, needed.

Valentino and Dance Madness," ch. 3 in *This Mad Masquerade*. Both authors view the controversy surrounding his success as important evidence of women's interest in a new kind of masculinity.

[179] On stereotyping of the work, see Lewis Ehrenberg, *Steppin' Out* (Westport: Greenwood Press, 1981), 83.

[180] "A Latin Lover," *Photoplay* (September 1921): 21. On sales of the book, see Mott, *Golden Multitudes*, 241, 325, 328. *The Four Horsemen of the Apocalypse* (Metro 1921). Viewed at a screening of the Museum of Film, Radio, and Television, Los Angeles, June 23, 2001 and on Kino.

[181] Robert Sherwood, *Life*, March 11, 1921, n.p. Valentino Core Clipping File, AMPAS.

Hailed as a masterpiece, the *Four Horsemen* became one of the decade's most successful films, launching the former unknown into a stardom that made plain the transformed landscape of women's sexual fantasies.[182] Valentino's erotic appeal struck some men as so uncommon that they resorted to describing his sexuality in non-human terms; on screen he was like a "panther," projecting "more sheer animal magnetism than any actor before or since."[183] Yet Glyn, like many women, described Valentino as the very human incarnation of the ideal lover, his technique at once "masterful and tender," radiating that "he knew everything about love."[184] *The Sheik*, the film that crystallized this appeal, emphasized just these qualities and accentuated how central an orientalized exoticism was to become to the erotic license he granted fans. The film was an adaptation of the current best-seller by E.M. Hull—another Englishwoman who wrote the novel while stationed with her soldier-husband in Algeria.[185] Hull's English heroine, Diana, was very different from Glyn's Lady. A youthful tomboy, Diana rejects her sexless, Anglo compatriots as unworthy of her interest and set off to explore the desert alone. Enter Valentino's Arab sheik, ruled partially by the uncivilized Eastern code that "When an Arab sees a woman he wants he takes her," partially by Western civilized

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[182] For indications of its box office success and a summary of its rave reviews, see "'The Four Horsemen' Ride on the Screen," *The Literary Digest* (March 26, 1921): 28-9. See also, Vachel Lindsay, The Art of the Moving Picture (New York: Liveright, 1970, rpt. 1922), 5. "That picture thrilled me as *The Birth of a Nation* had. Everything about it was magnificent…I read the unstinting paise of the movie reviewers the next morning, enviously wishing that Valentino could have been my find," Lasky, *I Blow My Own Horn*, 146-7.

[183] Lasky, *I Blow My Own Horn,* 148.

[184] Glyn, *Romantic Adventure*, 299-300; "looked" Glyn quoted in Leider, 195; Hardwick, 242.

[185] Little is known about the reclusive Hull, on sales, see Mott, *Golden Multitudes*, 251-2, 313.

romanticism enshrining true, mutual love as the only basis for marriage and sex.[186] As a hero ruled by Arab custom, Valentino's Sheik needs only to spy Diana from distance to read her desire, sweeping his "white gazelle" off to his sumptuous tent where he teaches Diana to desire him. Luckily, the pull of his, as yet unknown, European blood kicks in so that he waits to fully initiate his prize until she declares her love.[187]

The film abounded with racist stereotypes that naturally revealed much about the "West" and little about the "East." Despite the constantly stressed superiority of the West—tied to English women's freedoms to run off and their beautiful skin—only the dark cover of the East liberates Diana's passion. Valentino's huge success as the ideal lover suggested women's desire to act the independent, sensual adventuress, their insecurity at the part, and the seeming impossibility of the performance not just with Western men, but within of their civilization's cultural codes.[188] *Variety* called *The Sheik* "preposterous," but admitted it "won out" because "it dealt with every caged woman's desire to be caught up in love clasp by some he-man who would take responsibility and dispose of the consequences."[189] "'Oh, what a Lucky Girl to have enough money to take a trip like that—a trip across the wild desert with only Arab guides in her company. Oh, how daring! If it were only I!'" recalled one fan. "The more I saw the picture the more I fell in love with handsome hero—I resented him for his abrupt and brutal manners but

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[186] *Sheik* advertisement, *Exhibitors Herald* (November 5, 1921): 12-3; "Letters to the Times," *Los Angeles Times*, November 10, 1921, 11.
[187] Dialogue from *The Sheik* (Famous-Players Lasky/Paramount 1921). Viewed on Kino.
[188] Although the exotic does not play a role in her argument, this reading illustrates the dynamic of later romance readers' responses described by Janice Radway in *Reading the Romance* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 1991).
[189] "The Sheik," *Variety*, November, 11, 1921, 37.

still I used to care for him."[190] "Seems like an ordinary picture," remarked one exhibitor, "but as a lady patron remarked, 'How that man can love!'"[191]

If women in audiences across America "raved" over Valentino, as exhibitor after exhibitor noted, men were "divided in opinion" about the masculinity he represented.[192] Much critical commentary seized upon how the film had dramatically toned down the brutality of the Sheik's method of awakening the heroine—opting for passionate kisses instead of rape—to impugn the star's virility. "He is a soft, sapless sort of Sheik beside the character delineated by Edith M. Hull," scoffed one review.[193] As younger boys began to ape the actor's dress and admitted to studying his technique on screen, their elders lambasted Valentino's feminized manliness as not suitable for American men. Unquestionably beautiful and always attired to highlight his sinewy physique, Valentino was a glamorous male subject whose power lay in his ability to trade on women's desires. However masterful and, at times, forceful, his erotic technique, Valentino displayed a single-minded devotion to eliciting his heroine's pleasure—heroines whose sexual instincts needed an encouraging hand. The criticism that Valentino was not domineering enough conflated terror with sex—a tendency for both sexes in Victorian conventions—and might be read as fear that strongly sexed women needed even more strongly sexed men to retain the traditional balance in power relations between them. Yet, more typically, complaints fastened on to how the talents and good looks that made him such a success with women were distinctly un-American. "All men hate Valentino," declared a

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[190] Female patron quoted in Jowett, Jarvie, and Fuller, 243.
[191] "What the Picture Did for Me," *Exhibitors Herald* (April 8, 1922): 89.
[192] "What the Picture Did for Me," *Exhibitors Herald* (April 22, 1922):76.
[193] Unsourced clipping, Valentino Scrapbooks, Robinson Locke Collection, New York Public Library for the Performing Arts, Theatre Collection; hereafter, NYPL-RLTC.

male writer in *Photoplay*.[194] "I hate his Oriental optics. I hate his classic nose; I hate his Roman face; I hate his smile; I hate his patent leather hair; I hate his Svengali glare; I hate him because he dances too well," and, finally getting to the point, "I hate him because he's the great lover of the screen…too apt in the art of osculation."

Valentino's exotic, continental qualities, however, drew support from more than just his legion of women fans. Valentino's star had been launched, cultivated, and intimately associated with, two of early Hollywood's most powerful women personalities: June Mathis and Alla Nazimova. Much like Glyn, the work of these two women involved lending a cosmopolitan sensibility and aesthetic to the industry's postwar product and Hollywood's social environment. Directors had initially considered the Italian actor "too foreign looking" for leads, consigning Valentino to bit parts as "heavies" in low budget films.[195] Clara Kimball Young—who had declared her preference for Latin Lovers to *Photoplay*—gave Valentino his real break, casting him in one of her company's "specials," *The Eyes of Youth.*[196] As a "cabaret parasite" hired to entrap Young's character in a compromising situation, the actor demonstrated, in one short scene, the seductive power to do just that. The performance caught the eye of June Mathis, the most powerful woman executive working for a major studio in 1918. A child actress who got her break five years earlier in a fan magazine competition for scenario writers, Mathis had quickly risen to head Metro's scenario department and to act as the studio's "artistic supervisor," writing, casting, and overseeing productions from start to

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[194] Dick Dorgan, "A Song of Hate," *Photoplay* (July 1921): 27.
[195] Griffith quoted in Lillian Gish, *Dorothy and Lillian Gish* (New York: Scribner, 1973), 81. On his type casting, see Leider, 77-97.
[196] *Eyes of Youth* (Clara Kimball Young Film Corp. 1919). Viewed at the Library of Congress.

finish.[197] An open devotee of European art and artists, she took on a task most thought impossible: adapting Ibanez's novel.[198] Described as possessing an "indomitable will and dangerous temper," Mathis overrode the objection of *The Four Horsemen*'s director to cast the unknown foreigner whose screen presence was so different than most leading men's.[199] Both decisions demonstrated her larger objective: to raise the stature of film by associating it with the seriousness of continental art and mores.

Before the release of *The Four Horsemen* proved her right, this ambition had led Mathis into an alliance with Alla Nazimova, the actress Valentino credited with teaching him how to act.[200] Nazimova's first studio press biography hailed the "Russian" "as the last of the great stage artistes to heed the call of the screen."[201] Nazimova was actually

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[197] June Mathis, "Pursuing a Motion Picture Plot," *The Photoplay Journal* (October 1917): 24-5. Mathis File, SWEYD collection, NYPL-TC; *Moving Picture World*, June 18, 1921, 719. For more on her career, see Mathis Goldwyn Producing Corp., Mathis Biographical File, AMPAS. AFI credits her with 113 films in her 12 year career before her sudden death at 35 in 1926, see obituary, *The New York Times* "June Mathis Dies While at Theatre; At 35 She Was the Screen's Highest Paid Woman Executive—Discovered Valentino," Mathis File, SWEYD collection, NYPL-TC.

[198] Mathis, "Pursuing a Motion Picture Plot"; Katherine Lipke, "Most Responsible Job Ever Held by a Woman," *Los Angeles Times*, June 3, 1923, 6; Ivan St. Johns, "Fifty-Fifty," *Photoplay* (October 1926): 46. Writing after her death, he credited Mathis's "Metro Screen Classics" as reaching "heights achieved by no other woman writer in pictures."

[199] Adela Rogers St. Johns, *Love, Laughter and Tears* (Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1978), 167.

[200] Valentino, quoted in Gavin Lambert, *Nazimova* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1997), 247. Born Adelaida Leventon to middle class, secular Jews in 1879, Alla, as she was called, took the generic Russian name Nazimova to hide her ethnic background when she entered Moscow's prejudiced theatrical scene. On her upbringing see Lambert, 3-67. For the worsening condition that all Jews faced after the 1890s, see Albert Lindemann, *Esau's Tears; Modern Anti-Semitism and the Rise of the Jews* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 1997), 279-306.

[201] "Nazimova Last of Great Stage Artistes to Heed the Call of the Screen," *Selznick—Pictures Magazine*, 4, SWEYD Collection, NYPL-TC. The Alla Nazimova files, SWEYD and Robinson Locke Collections at NYPL-TC contain a vitual mountain of material on the actress, dating back to her first U.S. performances in Russian.

the first established, and very foreign, "artiste" to make a successful splash in the movies, creating a personality in Hollywood that turned on flaunting her unconventional "artistic temperament."[202] The words "genius," "intense," "dominant," "mysterious," "exotic," and, finally, "Russian" consistently modified the name of actress who lent her celebrity to the fight for woman suffrage and, later, the Equal Rights Amendment. [203] Even more than the characters she played, the personality of the industry's first "Madame" lent a cosmopolitan, sophisticated glamour to its new Hollywood home, pressing further than Glyn the boundaries of what "expression" and "experience" might justify for the ladies. When remembered at all, Nazimova is typically cited as the first in the line of more famous foreign movie stars who followed her: Pola Negri, Greta Garbo, and Marlene Dietrich. The positioning suggests the degree to which she taught Hollywood an important in lesson in the appeal of "authentic," foreign glamour.

Since Madame Nazimova's theatrical pedigree and foreign status played such important roles in mediating her performance in Hollywood, the star made sure movie fans knew with whom they dealt. This was a "Russian Crimean superwoman," a genuine "eccentric" "who *made* New York like [playwright Henrik] Ibsen, who actually startled the American theater into newness of life."[204] Nazimova's promotion was no mere

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[202] St. Johns, *Honeycomb*, 117. Elsie Ferguson, to whom she was sometimes compared, was also a stage star who made a real success in films in this period. But Ferguson was a conventional American beauty who performed mostly in comedies and musicals and never garnered anything like Nazimova's critical stature.

[203] Herbert Howe, "A Misunderstood Woman, *Photoplay* (April 1922), 24. Nazimova File, NYPL-TC contains publicity shots for both causes.

[204] "Eccentric," Helen Raferty, "Elsie or Allah?" *Photoplay* (July 1918): 23; "Russian superwoman," "Alla Nazimova," *Motion Picture Classic* (August 1918): n.p, Nazimova Clippings, Film appearances, 1919-20, NYPL-TC; *"made*," "Open Letter to Nazimova," *Photoplay* (August 1921): 31. Italics in the original.

publicity stunt.[205] A small, lithe figure with a mop of short, black curls and large, blue eyes, she had been among the first exposed to the techniques of Constantin Stanislavski, the Moscow Art Theatre's famed director.[206] Arriving in New York on a Russian company's 1905 tour, Nazimova stayed, commandeering the direction of her triumphant English-speaking 1906 debut in *Hedda Gabler*; a performance which, as claimed, resulted in Ibsen's first U.S. success.[207] Nazimova's Hedda was a woman turned ferocious inside the cage of a respectable, middle-class marriage.[208] Over the next three years she solidified her stature playing Ibsen's other "modern," "soul-harassed" wives who, "hell-bent on independence," refused to remain trapped in *A Doll's House*.

The sensation of the personality that Nazimova crafted displayed the qualities that Hollywood seized upon in the postwar period. [209] "A hint of the Slav, a hint of the Oriental, a hint of the Parisienne, a hint of the woman of the theater," was one critic's attempt to capture her persona.[210] A few detractors called her Hedda "a bit of feline and

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[205] For a summary of reviews that makes this point, see Anna McClure Sholl, "Madame Nazimova—A Comparison," *Lippincott's Monthly Magazine* (November 1907): APS Online 684. By the next year another summary review displays how she was assumed to be in this company, "Maude Adams in a New Incarnation of Peter Pan," *Current Literature* (March 1908): APS Online 319.
[206] See Lambert, 78-91; DeWitt Bodeen, "Nazimova," *Film in Review* 23.10 (1972): 578-9.
[207] "Hedda Gabler," *Current Literature* (January 1907): APS Online 60. The author summarizes her rave reviews. On Nazimova taking over the play's direction, see Lambert, 135-6. A young Eugene O'Neil claimed the performance opened up "an entire new world of drama" for him, quoted in Lambert, 138. See also Gerald Bordman, *Oxford Companion to American Theatre* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1984), 501.
[208] Sholl, "Madame Nazimova—A Comparison," *Lippincott's Monthly Magazine*, 684.
[209] "Maude Adams in a New Incarnation of Peter Pan," *Current Literature*, 319; "What's Is Wrong with Our Theaters?" *Current Literature* (November 1907): APS Online 551-3.
[210] "The Transformation of Nazimova," *Current Literature* (December 1907): APS Online 671.

voluptuous Orientalism," but most, initially, lauded just these qualities.[211] "Our English-speaking actresses lack often the emphatic and expressive temperament. It is Madame Nazimova's by birthright as a Slav," observed one.[212] "Our actresses hesitate to ply the appeal of their sex, except, needless to say, in musical plays," declared another in a statement that again registered Anglo-American fear of women's sexuality, but on "the continental stage…the wise actress counts it as a telling resource, a ready tool, and cultivates it accordingly. It is strong in Madame Nazimova."[213] Her success helped to change the mind of the powerful theatrical producer Charles Frohman about what American women wanted to see around the same time that Glyn's romances were topping the best-seller chart. Having previously declared audiences had no taste for the "erotic and the decadent," Frohman now said they wanted "sex conflict."[214] Increasingly Nazimova starred in less "high art" productions like *Bella Donna*, an adaptation of Robert Hichens's novel that followed his similarly incendiary *The Garden of Allah*, two best-sellers whose passion-starved Anglo heroines bent on Orientalist escape kept company with Glyn's and Edith Hull's.[215] Pola Negri, whom producers were busily luring to Hollywood in 1921, would make her American film debut in *Bella Donna.*

Playing the "First Femme Fatale of the American theatre," "a dark enchantress from the East," Nazimova traveled to Hollywood and built her home "The Garden of Allah Garden of Alla, "a three-and-a-half acre compound on Sunset Boulevard filled

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[211] "Hedda Gabler," *Current Literature*, 60.
[212] Unnamed critic quoted in "The Transformation of Nazimova," *Current Literature*, 672.
[213] "Hedda Gabler," *Current Literature*, 60.
[214] Frohman quoted in Ibid., 152. Frohman was a member of the Theatrical Syndicate that controlled many of the nation's most important theaters,
[215] On Hichens, see Mott, *Golden Multitudes*, 251-2, 325.

"with the faint pervasive fragrance of the Orient."[216] Her first foray into what she called the "photodrama" was a 1916 film adaptation of *War Brides*, a hit anti-war play in which she had starred.[217] *The New York Times* declared the actress not only "screen[ed] well," but reached "a tragic height never before attained in a motion picture."[218] Though nearly forty, her appeal convinced Metro's East Coast head of production that she could fill the gap left by Theda Bara's fading appeal.[219] This was an authentic exotic—a Russian "foreigner from that most foreign of all countries" as *Photoplay* put it—and a bona fide artist whose "revolutionary spirit" was expected to flout conventions.[220] Hollywood's "aristocrat of the arts" possessed the "heart" of a "rebel." She was such the consummate performer that it was impossible to know whether she was "always acting—or she never acts."[221] Such commentary suggested how difficult it was to judge her personality by ordinary standards. Nazimova signed a five-year contract with Metro in 1918 that included a starting salary of $13,000 a week and the right to approve her director, co-stars, and scripts.[222] Shortly before Lasky advised DeMille and MacPherson to make a movie tackling "modern problems and conditions," Nazimova teamed up with an eager June Mathis. Playing characters who displayed her versatile exoticism, including a cabaret singer in the Latin Quarter, a gypsy, the daughter of an Arab sheik, and a "half-

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[216] *VanityFair* quoted in Lambert, 150, 158-65; Howe "A Misunderstood Woman," *Photoplay*, 128.
[217] "Nazimova's Last," *Selznick Picture Magazine*. *War Brides* (Lewis J. Selznick 1916).
[218] *The New York Times* quoted in Bodeen, 585.
[219] On the determination Nazimova should replace Bara, see Lambert, 190. On Bara's decline, see Genini, 79-87.
[220] Howe, "A Misunderstood Woman," *Photoplay*, 24-5.
[221] "Aristocrat" and "rebel," Edwin Fredericks, "The Real Nazimova," *Photoplay* (February 1921): 128; "she," Howe, "A Misunderstood Woman," *Photoplay*, 120.
[222] Bodeen, 587; Lambert, 190.

caste Eurasian" caught up in the Boxer Rebellion. Nazimova's heroines ran "the gamut between Vice and Virtue with dazzling effect."[223]

By 1919, a year of "superlative" box offices hits put Nazimova at the center of the industry's publicity where her star was held aloft by her "seemingly overwhelming appeal for the feminine sex," according to *Motion Picture Magazine*.[224] Fans offered a peek inside Allah's garden encountered a figure who "abjures makeup" and preferred the "costume of a Chinese boy."[225] This decidedly epicene character wore her "short hair clipped with boyish brevity" and "slightly touched with grey." Fan magazines were fond of extolling the "boyish" charms of an actress who noted that "most of my friends are young girls"—friends who called her "Peter and sometimes Mimi"—and praised the talent of her female "protégés" to the press.[226] Though it is impossible to know how readers interpreted these references, the more knowing would have recognized them as cues indicating her sexual preference for women. Among Hollywood insiders Nazimova's taste for the ladies was as well publicized as her cosmopolitan salon and all-girl pool parties—whose regular guests included the Talmadge sisters and Mathis.[227]

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[223] Except for *Camille* and *Salome* my description of her films are taken from Bodeen's filmography, 601-0. Most of her films have been lost or exist in fragments. For a retelling of Edith Bodley's novel, adapted by Mathis, see "The Red Lantern," *Photoplay* (June 1919): 38-41, 113. For an extensive accounting of the acclaim the film met, see Nazimova Files, "Red Lantern," NYPL-TC.

[224] "Superlative," "Leading Photoplays," *Current Opinion* (April 1918): 260. "Feminine," quoted in Lambert, 210; "Open Letter to Nazimova," *Photoplay* was written by a female who declared she had belonged to women fans since her Ibsen days.

[225] Howe, "A Misunderstood Woman," *Photoplay*, 128.

[226] "Girls," *Photoplay* (May 1919), quoted in Lambert, 210; "protégé," "Plays and Players," *Photoplay* (September 1919): 104.

[227] On the open secret of her sexual preference for women, see Lambert, 199, 249; Leider, 137-47.

Because of the total control she demanded, Nazimova quickly became notorious for alienating directors, but she made room for several powerful women, including Mathis and designer Natacha Rambova on the set. After completing *The Four Horsemen*, Mathis sought to associate her protégé with Nazimova's brand of passionate, continental artistry. The actress cast Valentino as the male lead, Armand, in their upcoming production of *Camille; Paris 1921*.[228] "Why not a Camille of today?" asked Mathis's opening intertitle in their "modernized version" of the melodrama that, in some important sense, had made their "modernized" lives possible.[229] What was most sensational about this highly stylized, decidedly non-naturalistic *Camille* was how it blatantly aligned itself with the expressionist films transforming Berlin's cinematic scene.[230] Dominated by its avant-garde Art-Deco costumes and settings, Mathis, Nazimova, and her protégé, designer Natacha Rambova, created the first domestic art film.[231] Drawn into these women's professional and personal circle, Valentino fell in love with and married Rambova, the goddaughter of celebrity designer Elsie deWolfe.

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[228] *Camille* (Metro 1921). Quote, Lawrence Hutton, *Plays and Players* (New York: Hurd and Houghton, 1875), 158. On *Camille*'s popularity, see Stephen Stanton ed., *Camille and Other Play*s (New York: Hill and Wang, 1957), xxvvi; Clayton Hamilton, "The Career of Camille," in *The Theory of the Theater* (New York: Henry Holt, 1910), 369-71.
[229] Advertisement, *Exhibitors Herald* (November 19, 1921): 23
[230] On Germany's dominance of the art film scene in the 1920s, see Ephraim Katz, *The Film Encyclopedia* (New York: Perigee Books, 1979), 476-7; Baxter, chap. 2.
[231] By "art film" I mean a product that sought to define itself by its alliance with contemporary movements in other arts, rather than by genre, as with most films produced in America. Art films place visual, aesthetic qualities first. Rambova's real name was Winifred Shaughnessy Hudnut. The stepdaughter of a tycoon, she spent much of her adolescence in Paris with her godmother Elsie deWolfe and attended boarding schools in England. Rambova studied ballet at the Paris Opera, moved into costume and set design at the Imperial Russian Ballet Company in New York, traveled with the company to Los Angles where she went to work for Nazimova. See Michael Morris, *Madame Valentino* (New York: Abbeville Press, 1991).

Though Nazimova may have been the most famous personality the press depicted as possessing such a flagrantly female centered and ambiguous sexual persona, other accounts described early Hollywood as a place of "infinite freedom" "where almost everything goes."[232] "In these days of suffragets [sic] and long-haired poets, bifurcated skirts and lisping ladies, it's hard to know who's who and what's what. Its getting to be quite rage—this exchange of identities," was how *Motion Picture* described the trend.[233] Mathis had cunningly displayed such a world in *The Four Horsemen*, writing a shot of two lesbians nuzzling in a Parisian café and a scene in which a bevy of German officers dressed in women's clothes familiarly staggered down the stairs of a captured French chateau toward a waiting banquet. "To hundreds of people that meant no more than a masquerade party," Mathis admitted, but "to those who had lived and read, and who understood life the scene stood out as one of the most terrific things in the picture."[234]

Photoplay writer Adela Rogers St. Johns joked about the unconventional domestic arrangements of stars like Nazimova in "a personally conducted tour of the Hollywood film colony" she gave readers.[235] "On the left, the home of Madame Nazimova and her husband. I beg pardon lady? No, I don't know his name, but I'm sure he's got one." Tactics designed to exploit fans' curiosity about early Hollywood—and how residents lived within it—became a common staple in the repertoire of writers like St. Johns. A native Californian who attended Hollywood High, she had been a reporter at William Randolph Hearst's *Los Angeles Herald* before deciding that working for

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[232] Mary Winship, "Oh, Hollywood! A Ramble in Bohemia," *Photoplay* (May 1921): 112.
[233] Quoted in Anthony Slide, "The Silent Closet," *Film Quarterly* 52.4 (1999): 30.
[234] Mathis quoted in Lambert, 201.
[235] St. Johns, "Sight-Seeing The Movies" *Photoplay* (April 1921): 30-31, 109-110.

Photoplay was better suited to raising her two children.[236] James Quirk, *Photoplay*'s editor in New York, hired St. Johns to fulfill the demand for on-the-spot interviews and "anecdotes" that sought to plumb "the secret of Hollywood's personalities and the drama and melodrama that sprang from these."[237] Called "Hollywood's Mother Confessor," St. Johns became the trusted friend of many about whom she wrote, hosting with her "best friend" Frances Marion regular "hen parties" that included many of the industry's most powerful women.[238] "As The Movies swept the country," she recalled, the "news value" of stories about Hollywood and "Hollywood-ites" skyrocketed.[239] No longer a sleepy backwater, Los Angeles whirred with visitors and construction. The industry's explosive growth transformed the city's postwar landscape, "chopping down the graceful pepper trees" so that "tourists could have a better view."[240] A *Forum* reporter derided residents' protests "that the present booming prosperity of the city is due to motion pictures," declaring "everyone knows…the money pouring into Los Angeles coffers" was due to "movies and tourists."[241] "They live pictures and think pictures in Los Angeles."

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[236] St. Johns, *Honeycomb*, 90-1.
[237] Ibid., 101, 111.
[238] Frances Marion describes the "hen parties" held with her "best friend," Marion, 6, 101; Moore dedicates her autobiography, "To Adela Rogers St. Johns, my friend and mentor since my first days in Hollywood."
[239] St. Johns, *Honeycomb*, 118.
[240] Marion, 66.
[241] "A Visit to Movieland the Film Capital of the World—Los Angeles," *The Forum* (January 1920):17-29. Despite its "everyone knows" construction, this article went to great lengths to establish such ties. On the construction explosion of the suburb in 1920, see also See also, "Real Estate Conditions in Hollywood," *Los Angeles Times*, January 2, 1921, 16; "Cinema Factor in City's Wealth," *Los Angeles Times*, January 17, pt. II, 11; "The 'Movie" as an Industry," *The Literary Digest* (October 16, 1917): 55-62; "The Jazzy, Money-Mad Spot Where Movies Are Made," *The Literary Digest* (March 6, 1921): 71-2, 75.

A spotlight suddenly landed upon "the movie colony" and its new home. "Fan magazines had sprung up and every day the newspapers devoted columnar miles of space to film subjects," Zukor remembered about the period immediately following the war. "We co-operated by furnishing copy, raising the shades so to speak, for the public to look at us. Therefore, we had no right to complain if some people didn't like what they saw."[242] As Paramount's president admitted, such advertising was good for business, good for an industry bent on becoming the entertainment and fashion capital of the world. But whether through an innocence born from beginnings, or the tension between the needs of an emerging global industry and of independent newspapers and fan magazines to sell copy, it is difficult not to think in retrospect that the advertising of Hollywood spun out of control. In any event, St. Johns watched "Hollywood take over where [P.T. Barnum] left off as we became The Greatest Show on Earth."[243]

A circus on the frontier by the sea was the earliest trope used by both the press and participants to conjure the environment created by "The Romance of Making the Movies" in Los Angeles.[244] "The 'feel' of Hollywood at this time was like carnival, or the way one feels when the circus is coming to town, only the circus was always there," wrote screenwriter Lenore Coffee, echoing a sentiment shared by many.[245] One of the first accounts, printed in *Everybody's Magazine*, detailed the wanderings of a reporter

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[242] Zukor, 202-2.
[243] St. Johns, *Honeycomb*, 114.
[244] "The Romance of Making the 'Movies," *The Literary Digest* (October 23, 1915): 902-3. The article was an abbreviated version of William Allen Johnston, "In Motion-Picture Land," *Everybody's Magazine* 33, no. 4 (October 1915): 437-448.
[245] Coffee, 23. See for instance, Sennett, 45.

around the "big, bustling Western" ranches-cum-studios "In Motion-Picture Land."[246] The reporter cataloged the sideshows on display, ranging from "a Japanese pagoda" to "a Dutch village with windmills" to "the ruins of a Scotch castle" to "a New York tenement district" to "the largest private collection" of "jungle animals" "in the world." Here, "in the dazzling California sunshine" a "bewildering democracy" prevailed among players.[247] Here, play-acting and reality fused. "No part of the world" was free from the "invasion" of performers and film crews whose work so often spilled into the cityscape that one looked about for a camera whenever anything happened "unexpectedly."[248] Initially, residents did not "understand these professionals from another world and because they were different—and often amazingly more interesting than ordinary citizens—they came in for no small amount of unjust criticism."[249] Yet the industry's "millionfold investment" in the city had blunted such critiques as Los Angelenos grew to believe that, however "colorful" the flickers' activities, their "dissipations" involved little more than a "nightly…visit to some seven o'clock movie show" or the "prize fights."

By 1921, descriptions of such picturesque, innocent chaos had vanished along with the pepper trees and orange groves. Now the opulent lives of the industry's kings and queens, and the growth of hierarchy and defined roles within studios, invited comparisons to Europeans courts.[250] But the movie colony's ethic did not resemble a traditional aristocracy, which valued social restraint and censured any display of passion

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[246] "The Romance," *The Literary Digest*, 902; Johnston, "In Motion-Picture Land," 437, 439, 447.
[247] Johnston, "In Motion Picture Land," 441, 440.
[248] "The Romance," *The Literary Digest*, 902; Johnston, "In Motion-Picture Land," 443.
[249] "In the Capital of Movie-Land," *The Literary Digest* (November 10, 1917): 82-3.
[250] Gertrude Atherton, "The Lot," *Photoplay* (June 1921): 92-93.

or strong emotion—as Glyn had learned the hard way.[251] Instead, as *Photoplay* blithely declared, Hollywood was "a city in Bohemia, featuring real movie thrills, morals, and manners."[252] Anita Loos and John Emerson warned readers about encountering a "world which may seem a bit topsy-turvy to the outsider, with its own peculiar customs, and a greater freedom from restraint than is customary in the conventional world outside," in "Movie Manners," a chapter in *Breaking Into the Movies* that advised hopefuls on how to fit in socially.[253] The colony's "outlandish ideas," they explained, were "the very same ones which are always associated with artists—a bohemian spirit which is the same whether in Hollywood or the Latin Quarter of Paris." *Photoplay* elaborated: "The law of the colony is that everybody is entitled to do exactly as he or she sees fit in personal matters. If you don't like it you may stay away but you must not knock."[254] "Even the part of the colony that is happily married and lives more like the rest of the world, subscribes to this *esprit de corps*," Emerson and Loos cautioned. Associating the movie colony with bohemians invoked the ethic of a band of artists expressing the romantic ideal in a way of life.[255] Driven to realize their individuality in unique works of art, bohemians valued originality, imagination, and self-expression—signaled by a capacity

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[251] Here I follow Campbell's description of the aristocratic ideal of character, Campbell, "Understanding traditional and modern practices of consumption in eighteenth century England: a character-action approach," 49-51.
[252] Winship, "Oh, Hollywood!" *Photoplay*, 20. For two views attempting to discredit the promotion of Hollywood-bohemia, see "The Real Bohemia," editorial in the *Los Angeles Times*, January 2, 1921, pt. 2, 4; Benjamin Hampton, "Cattar Lattan, USA," *Photoplay* (June 1921): 80-2.
[253] John Emerson and Anita Loos, *Breaking Into the Movies* (New York: The James McCann Company, 1921), 26.
[254] Winship, "Oh, Hollywood!" 112.
[255] For more on the relationship of bohemianism to modern consumptive practices, see Campbell, "Understanding traditional and modern practices of consumption in eighteenth century England: a character-action approach," 52-5.

to indulge in strong emotions. These "aristocrats of pleasure" also delighted in shocking the guardians of morality in their pursuit of new, exotic tastes and experiences.[256]

In 1921, the turn toward the Hollywood-as-Bohemia trope might be read as a new marketing tactic, suggesting the more sophisticated, European-flavored glamour the industry sought to purvey. And it was. By the 1920s, calling a social environment bohemian was a cliché that conjured a community of creative spirits who sacrificed conventional comforts for the higher aim of art. Yet bohemians were also associated with an unconventional code of conduct, manners—and sometimes morals—designed to challenge and shock the majority. It is easy to imagine how such publicity might have also contradicted the needs of an industry attempting to rationalize production and stabilize profits. Reducing Hollywood-as-Bohemia to simply a marketing device also discounts the art, and artists, in the industry and, consequently, misses a powerful aspect of what it offered to fans. "No matter how cynical they may seem, no matter how pessimistically they may talk," warned Emerson and Loos, "these people, in the bottom of their hearts, consider the photoplay a form of art and themselves as artists."[257] "If you think movies are a low-brow form of making a living your associates will surely become aware of your state of mind and you will be quietly frozen out." Thinking about Hollywood as a new Bohemia takes the artistic sensibility that animated many in the movie colony seriously. It also helps to restore, as St. Johns suggested, how "the

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[256] Henry Murger, *The Latin Quarter* (*Scenes de la vie Boheme*), tr., Ellen Marriage and John Selwyn (London: Greening, 1908), 42.
[257] Emerson and Loos, 26-7.

language of superlatives" and "breathless excitement" in fan magazines exaggerated qualities that bore some relationship to "that time and place and all its people."[258]

Years later, St. Johns landed upon *"exaggeration"* as the key to how the "peaceful country village" of Hollywood suddenly came to resemble "the Left Bank," "Bloomsbury of London," and "Greenwich Village when it was not a phony tourist trap."[259] St. Johns thought casting early Hollywood's movie colony as the "sink of iniquity" as absurd as claiming they were "ordinary people going about their business." To her, the colony was filled with artists "panning gold" in a "new Medium" with spades called "artistic temperament." Exaggeration captured the tactics of fan magazines, of producers who "thought Big," of the motion picture craft, and of the colony's sensibility. Those who became stars working without sound and on the flat canvas of celluloid relied on a type of exaggeration akin to both how a microscope and a telescope work, displaying equal facility for distilling and enlarging emotions. What The Loveliest Working Girl Made Good, The Glamour Queen, The First Lady of Romance, The Ideal Marriage, The Exotic Aristocrat of the Arts, and The Latin Lover shared was a talent for offering fans imaginative access to an exaggeration of what they could desire. And now The Ideal Romantic Environment arose to manifest these desires in an entire approach to life. Consuming Hollywood-Bohemia let fans identify with an environment that valued daydreaming, originality, play, and pleasure at the expense of utilitarian rationality.

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[258] St. Johns, *Honeycomb*, 114-8.

[259] All quotes this paragraph, Ibid. Italics in the original.

No members of the movie colony better captured this new bohemian spirit than the "MOVIE 'EXTRAS' WHOSE LIVES RIVAL SCREEN ROMANCE."[260] According to *The Literary Digest*, 15,000 such folks, representing "all classes," had been lured by the chance of a "new thrill" to the "center of screen romance," mixing "in probably the most perfect democracy the world has ever known." The "Ramble in Bohemia" that *Photoplay* offered fans—the first time it used the suburb to stand in for the movie business—used the figure of the "extra girl" to illustrate the entire terrain. [261] "'Oh, Hollywood!' Hollywood is different," the title explained, "She's as seductive as any Parisienne, but, as it were, she's a country girl gone wrong."[262] Photographs in the article depicted the extra girls' lives as a round of a play. A woman posed behind the wheel of a "stripped lizzie" convertible—the colony's "normal means of transportation"—wearing a jaunty beret in one. Another showed a group smoking over tea at the "'Come-On Inn,'" "the pet gathering-place for nearly everybody in the game." A third showed a bobbed-haired extra girl "saunter[ing] along" Hollywood Boulevard "exceedingly unconcerned, corsetless, sandaled, smoking carelessly." The author justified the focus, explaining that while "any number of types" formed "the background" of Hollywood's "Bohemianism," "the extra girl' type is the one impossible to ignore." They were "everywhere in Hollywood," "the most notable and effective of the new classes…Mostly they live alone, where their families are or where they come from, I don't know."

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[260] "Movie 'Extras' Whose Lives Rival Screen Romance," *The Literary Digest* (September 20, 1920): 69-70.
[261] Winship, "Oh, Hollywood!" *Photoplay*, 20-2, 112. Of course the role and function of the "extra girl" had been a staple in the fan genre since 1915. For *Photoplay* articles in which the type featured prominently between 1920-1 include, St. Johns, "Sight-Seeing the Movies"; Frances Denton, "Ride, Swim, Dance," (May 1921): 55-7; Benjamin Hampton, "Cattar Lattan, U.S.A," (June, 1921): 80-2.
[262] Winship, "Oh, Hollywood!" *Photoplay*, 20-2, 112. All quotes in this paragraph, Ibid.

But everyone knew where to find this class now: in a habitat that made manifest why they represented Hollywood's quintessential bohemian spirits. The extra-girls had created a "regular settlement" in "Laurel Canyon," "a long, slender wooded valley" that ran through the Santa Monica Mountains "into the very heart of the hills back of the studios" in West Hollywood. Here they lived in "cabins" that expressed their "raw individuality," though they were all filled with the same things: "phonographs," "guitars," "an occasional piano," tools to sew, paint, and act "'home brewers'"—and, presumably, a "stripped lizzie" out front. A photograph offered readers a look at the "real interior atmosphere" of one.[263] Showing a woman who resembled Nazimova on a wicker chaise in the midst of changing a record, the picture's caption read, "The rough board walls, the phonograph, the Chinese housecoat, are absolutely typical of the mountain colony extra girls. How'd you like to live here?" Like good bohemians, the dress and possessions of extra girls manifested values that prized things for their exotic, new, aesthetic qualities, and the pleasurable experiences they offered.

The spirit animating extra-girls' lives exhibited the bohemian commitment to passion and play and demanded they uphold the bohemian convention of renouncing convention. Trading routine, steady jobs "for the chance to make a "masterpiece on celluloid," they lived "a more or less lawless, unpremeditated" "hand-to-mouth existence."[264] They were "odd, frank, sex-ful creatures. Worldly wise, cynical, well able to look after themselves, but supreme good fellows." Their "philosophy in life" was "to succeed in the movies—and to have a good time." *Photoplay* called their pursuit of their pleasures "the supreme characteristics the real Hollywood will show you." "There is of

[263] All quotes this paragraph, Ibid.
[264] All quotes in this paragraph, Ibid.

course a great deal of 'sex' in Hollywood. The freedom between men and women is very great…women can—and do—what they like" for "they work, play, love, and draw their pay checks on exactly the same basis as men." "Not even Greenwich Village has achieved so great a freedom in the regard." If extra-girls lost no status for acting like boys in this egalitarian paradise, they also faced no discrimination for being poor. The "clannish" colony possessed "no class distinction" "so far as social usages are concerned. People who have money make a great to-do about it, of course. But it makes absolutely no difference in the relations of people." And, as with all California stories, the landscape played a role as to why Hollywood's bohemia was superior to past incarnations. This "tropical" Bohemia set amidst "so darn much outdoors" created "a reckless, buoyant, sun-warmed, 'joie de vivre'" that was entirely different "from any real 'daughter of the pavements' like Greenwich Village or the Latin Quarter." Ultimately, making good in Hollywood was about having a good time.

Many of the same qualities described by *Photoplay* struck others reporting on Hollywood. But absent a romantic ideal to interpret the action of movie colony residents, indeed, absent considering the movies an art, what they saw provoked different responses. The accounts were most impressed by two things: Hollywood's "money-mad" character and Hollywood-ites cheerful disregard of the risks they took with the grave business of life.[265] Money-mad meant a foolish disregard about the spending of serious amounts of cash. Such madness was endemic: visible in the shelling-out of "$5000 just to get one scene right," the spending of over $100,000 on "a 'special,'" stars "simply

[265] "A Visit to Movieland the Film Capital of the World—Los Angeles,"" *The Forum*, 17-29; "The Jazzy, Money-Mad Spot Where Movies Are Made," *The Literary Digest*, 72-5. All quotes this paragraph, Ibid. Italics in the original.

throwing away their money on motors, clothes, and jewelry," and "wagering hundreds, thousands on the chances of pugilists of whose ability they know nothing." The critique rested upon the assumption that "ex-bartenders, milk-wagon drivers, telephone girls, manicurists, and stenographers" could not take a "business like" attitude toward work that appreciated the value of "*real* money." The extras "swarming" the studio streets illustrated the second problem. And, again, extra-girls, dominated the scene:

> girls—tall girls and short girls, curly-haired girls and girls with their hair drawn sleekly back over their brows, girls who suggest mignonettes and girls who suggest tuberoses; girls in aprons and girls in evening gowns—girls by the score, their faces all grease paint, waiting in little chattering groups for their big moment of the day.

What disturbed the reporter was how these extras knowingly pursued a course that depended upon "luck and opportunity," rather than on "the long and more or less bitter struggle" that most endeavors rewarded. Instead of worrying about their uncertain fates, such folks were out on "Saturday nights" "jazzing" among the stars, so "gay and carefree and careless, as to make the puritanical heart cease in its beat."

Other mainstream accounts displayed a growing awareness that women's romantic daydreams and longings sent them out west. "In the old days the small boy" used to decamp in search of adventure, "but fashions change with the changing years and now it is girls who run away to emulate their favorites of the screen."[266] Not only girls, but "wives" who "deserted husbands and babies" "and even gray-haired mothers" frequently made "the long trip west" "in hope of gratifying in their latter years a secret

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[266] "Gullible Girls Who Come to Grief Seeking Film Fame," *The Literary Digest* (July 3, 1920): 63-6. For a similar story see, "For Those Who Look Like Mary Pickford," *The Literary Digest* (March 6, 1920): 84.

dream."[267] These were not savvy bohemians or carefree extra girls jazzing it up, but "gullible girls," fleeced of their money by fake casting directors and photographers, "who have gone the way of oblivion or worse." The image of Hollywood-Bohemia shadowed these accounts. An article on "Do's and Don'ts" for screen hopefuls written by an "insider"—independent producer Benjamin Hampton—blamed the unjustifiably "bad reputation of movie-players" on why the "nice girl" was "almost invariably discouraged" from heading west.[268] According to Hampton, too many "colorful stories" in newspapers and magazines sent "an army of girls to Los Angeles every year." Hampton warned that those with "'Bohemian' bacillus" in their system "reached the end of their journey" in "a store," "a restaurant," or in the "morgue." "A fine screen actress cannot be fashioned out of coarse material…*The movies need the nice girl.* They need the girl that comes from a good family with education and tradition in back of her." Yet Hampton concluded: "when you do go, take your mother or auntie with you—and *live with her*."

Such articles assumed that any "girl" alone was either in danger or dangerous, particularly if she were working class. They also indicated the growing tendency to hold Hollywood's appeal, personalities, and product responsible for the "girl problem" nationwide. A *Photoplay* article entitled, "The Girl Problem and the Pictures," rebutted critics who charged the movies and actresses were "a tremendous factor in our girl problem."[269] The article interviewed Reverend Eva Ludgate who defended motion

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[267] "Gullible Girls," *The Literary Digest*, 66.

[268] "Movie Myths and Facts As Seen By an Insider," *The Literary Digest*, May 7, 1921, 38. The article was a condensed version of Benjamin Hampton, "Do You Want to Get Into the Movies?; Do's and Don'ts by a Manager for the Girl at Home," *Pictorial Review* (April 1921): 5, 49-51. All italics in the original.

[269] Margaret Sangster, "The Girl Problem and the Pictures," *Photoplay* (September 1921): 103-4. All quotes this paragraph, Ibid. Described as a Congregationalist minister,

pictures as displaying "'lovely women, charming men, and beautiful homes to many a child who has worked most of her life in a factory—who has lived, for countless years, in a slum.'" The assertion that young, working class women, perhaps assumed to be Hollywood's biggest fans, deserved to partake—if only fantastically—in the fruits of America's much vaunted standard of living was a difficult argument to challenge. The notion that films offered them their only glimpse of romantic bliss a rationale that upended common criticisms. But the article also admitted that young women might take the romantic expectations fostered by Hollywood down unexpected paths. "'It has raised her ideals,'" Reverend Ludgate asserted, "'has set her groping after newer, more wonderful vistas. But—it has stopped there. It has not tried to direct her groping.'"

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she defended the movies and the American girl to critical male brethren. See also Margaret Sangster, "Why Girls Don't Leave Home," *Photoplay* (October 1920): 67, 129.

Chapter 6.
Melodramas of Crisis; Hollywood as National Sex Panic

In February of 1921 *Pictorial Review*, a middle class women's monthly with a politically progressive slant, published an article by independent film producer Benjamin B. Hampton that provoked an incendiary response. Entitled, "Too Much Sex-Stuff in the Movies? Whose Fault Is It?" the article became the talk of the nation by featuring both Hampton's frank admission that "Sex-Stuff" had come to dominate Hollywood's postwar product and his provocative explanation of the dynamics involved in Hollywood-Bohemia's rise.[1] Hampton's status as an industry "insider" was crucial to the sensation "Too Much Sex-Stuff" aroused. Much of the reporting on it dramatically inflated his power, leaving the impression that a man at the center of the industry—"president of four motion picture companies"—had confessed the industry's moral sins.[2] Indeed, in the *History of the American Film Industry* Hampton wrote a decade later, he recalled how such press had made it difficult for him to convince national censorship activist Reverend Wilbur Crafts that he was not "'the spokesman for the industry,'" but merely a "small

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[1] Benjamin Hampton, "Too Much Sex Stuff in the Movies? Whose Fault Is It?" *Pictorial Review* (February 1921): 11, 113-116. Typical articles in *Pictorial Review* in this period include, "What's the Matter with Marriage; Results of the Contest Announced Last June," *Pictorial Review* (January 1921): 25, 48; Genevieve Pankhurst, "'For Better or Worse'; the Advanced Thought of the Entire World Seems to Favor More Liberal Marriage and Divorce Laws," *Pictorial Review* (February 1921): 68-72; Marion Harland, "What Shall We Do With These Young Girls?" *Pictorial Review* (November 1920): 17; Cornelia Stratton Parker, "It's A New World We Live In; the Woman Who Works; The Third Article in the Series," *Pictorial Review* (April 1921): 23, 60-1.

[2] For coverage that displays the emphasis on his status, and his role in bringing concerns over movie morality to a boil, see "Sex War On In Films," *Los Angeles Times*, January 30, 1921, pt. 3, 1. (hereafter *LAT*); "Where the Blame Lies for Movie 'Sex-Stuff,'" *The Literary Digest* (February 12, 1921): 28-9; "Overdoing the Sex Motive in Moving Pictures," *Current Opinion* (March 1921): 362-3; "Should Moving Pictures Be Censored?" *Current Opinion* (May 1921): 652-5.

frog in a big pond."[3] Hampton was indeed a latecomer in the picture business. As Vice President of the American Tobacco Company in New York, he had convinced his boss to finance a merger between the distribution company Paramount and the production companies FPL and VLSE in 1915.[4] When the attempt failed Hampton quit his job and moved to Los Angeles, producing, and sometimes writing and directing as well, fifteen films that were independently released between 1917 and 1922.[5]

According to Hampton, the reason for Hollywood's sex-stuff trend was simple: the "box-office value of sex-appeal."[6] Hampton used changes in the star system as evidence of both the economic forces at work and to explain why ambitious young women turned to sex-appealing to get ahead. In the past, a (fictional) "favorite star of the silver sheet, Beulah La Belle from Birmingham, Alabama" would have risen to the top playing "nothing but sad, tearful parts" in traditional melodramas. But not any more. La Belle was "no longer sad and sobby; no more does she shudder as the villain leers at her through the parlor window. Beulah is no longer weeping for a living. She is now sex appealing." Thus La Belle, a southerner, who in the old days would have played parts that mirrored her social role as the epitome of sexually pure white womanhood, had exchanged her virtuous image because of the lure of cash. This fact, according to Hampton, explained why so many young women "who would starve to death as a school-teacher or a milliner" poured into Hollywood anxious to take her place.

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[3] Benjamin B. Hampton, *History of the American Film Industry* (New York: Dover Publications, 1972, rpt. 1931), 293.
[4] Ibid., 150-69. Hampton frankly discusses the anger the article prompted within the industry.
[5] See *AFI Catalog of Silent Films* http://www.afi.com./members/catalogue.
[6] Hampton, "Too Much Sex Stuff in the Movies?" *Pictorial Review*. All quotes this paragraph, Ibid.

Next Hampton declared women, not men, responsible for designing and consuming the postwar fashion for sex-stuff. In describing how feminine desires and aptitudes lay behind the "present preponderance of sex-plays," he used an analogy appropriate to this woman's fiction, news, and fashion magazine: producers "cannot sell hob-nailed boots to the dancing slipper trade. Nor can the picture-maker sell drama or melodrama to audiences that hunger for sex stuff."[7] After indicting "You, innocent reader," or the many women readers of *Pictorial Review*, for Beulah's rise, he shared another inside tip: women scenarists best satiated the appetites of Hollywood's fans. "A curious feature of the business," Hampton claimed, was that "lady manufacturers of scenarios" were judged to "possess a surer instinct than men" for what "is wanted by the public to-day." Consequently, men's stories were often passed to a "woman writer…to jazz it up. She jazzes it and when the male person reads her revised version he realizes that his effusion was about as naughty as one of Little Rollo's adventures."

Since he judged the pictures' sex problem lay with the female sex, Hampton somewhat logically asked women to take responsibility for cleaning up the movies. Denouncing governmental censorship as "un-American," he declared "the remedy" lay "in the delicate hands of the women."[8] "Think of the tremendous power wielded by the General Federation of Women's Clubs. Just imagine what that organization of millions of women could do to secure better movies," the producer enthused. Even as Hampton contradicted the popular notion that the feminization of the industry's fan base had improved the movies' moral tenor and respectability, he seized upon a solution consistent

[7] All quotes this paragraph, Ibid.
[8] All quotes this paragraph, Ibid.

with the ideology of middle class white women's moral authority.[9] In essence, Hampton suggested that the entrance of large numbers of middle class women into the movies' audience had thus far failed to perform its proper function and called upon clubwomen to right this dereliction by rallying public support for good, clean films.

Few could have anticipated the article would spark nothing less than "a hot war" in the "SEX WAR ON IN FILMS."[10] Hampton had written the "sex and censorship" piece at the behest of *Pictorial Review*'s editor B.A. MacKinnon. A friend from his days in New York, MacKinnon had convinced him that anger over the industry's postwar moral decline meant that unless producers "cleaned their own house thoroughly" there would "not be much house left when reformers finished the job."[11] As "thousands of letters and newspaper clippings" poured into his study, Hampton grew to believe that "neither I nor anyone else had an adequate conception of the deep hold" that pictures had "on the classes as well as the masses." To Hampton, the breadth of commentary

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[9] A number of social historians have tied the development of middle class consciousness in the mid-nineteenth century to notions of domesticity, gentility, and conceptions of feminine moral guardianship, suggesting the ways in which the deeply gendered complex of ideals associated with "respectability" were used to distinguish the middle class. See Mary Ryan, *Cradle of the Middle Class* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 1981); John Kasson, *Rudeness and Civility* (New York: Hill and Wang, 1990); Jennifer Scanlon, *Inarticulate Longings* (New York Routledge, 1995); Robyn Muncy, *Creating a Female Dominion of* Reform (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1991). Film scholars who have focused on the strategies employed by the industry during the 1910s to achieve respectability and middle class audiences include, Lary May, *Screening Out the Past* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1980); Tom Gunning, *D.W. Griffith and the Origins of American Narrative Film* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1991); William Uricchio and Roberta Pearson, "Constructing the Mass Audience," *Iris* 17.3 (1994); Douglas Gomery, *Shared Pleasures* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1992).

[10] "Sex War On In Films," *Los Angeles Times*, January 30, 1921, pt. 3, p. 1 (hereafter *LAT*). For summaries of the furor it prompted in the daily press, see "Overdoing The Sex Motive In Moving Pictures," *Current Opinion* (March 1921): 362; "Where the Blame Lies for Movie 'Sex-Stuff,'" *The Literary Digest* (February 12, 1921): 28-9.

[11] Hampton, *History of the American Film Industry*, 290-3. MacKinnon's "editor's note" before "Too Much Sex-Stuff" supports this claim.

provoked by "Too Much Sex-Stuff?" proved "the influence of the movies had permeated every section of society." *Pictorial Review*'s editor, sensing he had stumbled onto a goldmine, turned the subject into a "series" that featured the likes of Jesse Lasky and Norma Talmadge contradicting Hampton's views.[12] By April, the *Ladies' Home Journal*, the nation's largest monthly and one aimed at respectable middle class women, referred to the idea that women composed "the low popular taste" influencing "the enormous new industry" "in its choice of themes and their execution" as common knowledge.[13] Yet, like much of the press, the *Journal* opposed legal censorship, calling upon "women's organizations throughout America" to solve the problem instead.[14]

By 1921, anyone with concerns about the nation's moral health had to talk about the movies. Yet the intensification of concerns over regulating the motion picture industry took shape within the broad context of postwar unrest over social regulation. Following the war, other inflammatory targets—including massive strike waves, the first national wave of race riots, and a "Red Scare"—absorbed and inflamed much of the public's attention throughout 1919.[15] By 1920, a dramatic upsurge in proposed censorship legislation, as well as the number of articles published on "movie morality," registered that significant attention had shifted to how the industry might be inculcating

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[12] Benjamin Hampton, "Do You Want to Get Into the Movies?" *Pictorial Review* (April 1921): 5, 49-51. This was billed as the "second in the series." Next came, Jessie Lasky, "Is There Any Sense in Censorship?" *Pictorial Review* (May 1921): 11, 40; Norma Talmadge, "What Do You Mean by 'Sex Plays," *Pictorial Review* (June 1921): 2, 91. Suggesting he might have taken a cue from the *Eagle*, the editor's note billed Talmadge's article as the "Fourth Article in the Campaign for Cleaner Movies."

[13] "Common Sense and the Film Menace," *Ladies' Home Journal* vol. 38 (April 1921): 24.

[14] Ibid. On newspapers nationwide opposition, see "Should Moving Pictures Be Censored?" *Current Opinion*, 652-5.

[15] See Nell Irvin Painter, *Standing at Armageddon* (New York: W.W. Norton, 1987), chap. 12.

viewers with dangerous ideas.[16] The new awareness of the movies' power to do "good" may have contributed to the increased concerns about its power to do "evil." Certainly, the industry and its personalities were widely perceived to have played a crucial role in helping the government to reshape public opinion to support participating in a war that many considered a foreign problem. Woodrow Wilson, after all, had been re-elected in 1916 on the platform, "He Kept Us Out of War." The biggest producers, represented in National Association of the Motion Picture Industry (NAMPI), worked closely with the Committee on Public Information (CPI) that Wilson created to manage the government's propaganda campaign.[17] Directed by George Creel, a former scenario writer and ad man, the CPI enlisted NAMPI to put stars like Mary Pickford to work selling Liberty Bonds and rousing public support.[18] NAMPI also worked in concert with the CPI to produce instructional short films and to co-ordinate the transformation of movie theaters into patriotic centers festooned with flags and information on how to aid the war effort. Tens of thousands of volunteer speakers—the "Four Minute Men"—stepped onto movie stages before the show to rally audiences' support. Ultimately, the success of such efforts led to heightened anxieties about the relationship between the media and the creation of *Public*

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[16] For how censorship movements were at a high-water mark by the end of 1920, see *Wid's Year Book 1920* (New York and Hollywood: Wid's Films and Film Folks, Inc.), 333-5. For the period between 1910 and 1929, more articles were published on "Moving Pictures and Morals" in 1920 and 1921 than any other two years before or after, see *The Readers' Guide to Periodical Literature* (Minneapolis: H.W. Wilson Co.). Of the 14 articles in the category for 1921, 13 were published before September.

[17] On the industry's role in the war effort, see Leslie Midkiff DeBauche, *Reel Patriotism* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1997), 104-36; Steven Vaughn, *Holding Fast the Inner Lines* (Chapel Hill: University of Wisconsin Press, 1980).

[18] George Creel, *How We Advertised America: The First Telling of the Amazing Story of the Committee on Public Information That Carried the Gospel of Americanism to Every Corner of the Globe* (New York: Harper, 1920).

Opinion.[19] "It has been discovered by individuals, by associations, and by governments," wrote a political scientist in "The Psychology of Propaganda" in 1920, "that a certain kind of advertising can be used to mold public opinion and control democratic majorities."[20] That same year the Chicago Motion Picture Commission initiated the first "scientific" study of the effect of movies on audiences.[21]

The seemingly overnight creation of a "Hollywood" filled with sexy, convention-defying cosmopolitan personalities and extra-girls, as well as the explosive popularity of the films and stories produced by and about both, inflamed such public concerns. Reformers with previously disparate views about the industry came to agree that respectable, American moral regulators were necessary to prevent the spread of "immoral, unmoral, unAmerican" social conventions and sexual behavior among the masses supporting Hollywood's rise.[22] New critics of the industry also appeared on the postwar scene, creating narratives about the threat posed by the Jewish men who had taken control of the most powerful amusement ever seen. These critics charged that a "Hebrew Trust" offered tens of millions of youths moral lessons everyday, lessons that endangered the virtue of young womanhood, and therefore the stability of the family, the

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[19] Walter Lippmann, *Public Opinion* (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1922); Walter Lippmann, *Liberty and the News* (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1922). For an account of scholarship on public opinion in the 1920s, Hanno Hardt, *Critical Communications Studies* (London: Routledge, 1992).

[20] Raymond Dodge, "The Psychology of Propaganda," in *Introduction to the Science of Sociology*, by Robert E. Park and Ernest Burgess (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1969, rpt. 1921), 837.

[21] On the survey conducted by University of Chicago sociologist, Ernest Burgess, see Lee Grieveson, *Policing Cinema* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2004), 211-2. On the proliferation of these studies, see Garth Jowett, Ian Jarvie, and Kathryn Fuller, eds., *Children and the Movies* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 1996).

[22] Fredrick Boyd Stevenson, "Who Reviewed Photoplay 'The Penalty'?" *Brooklyn Daily Eagle*, February 6, 1921, Music, Art, Theaters, and Women (hereafter *BDE* women), 1.

foundation of American civilization itself. By 1921, what all the narratives told by Hollywood's critics shared was a willingness to entwine panics over sexuality and race into a melodramatic narrative about the danger the industry posed to American values. For however much some may have disagreed on the details, their stories converged on one main point: Hollywood's immoral sex pictures, social environment, and leaders were "un-American" and needed to be controlled by regulators like themselves. In their most melodramatic form, these "Melodramas of Crisis" appear as the flipside of Hollywood's "Melodramas of Passion," offering a competing narrative in which Orientalist movie "moguls" set out to despoil a Gentile nation by corrupting the moral standards of its women with tantalizing poolside tango-parties and the stories of *A Million and One Nights.*[23]

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Hampton claimed he wrote "Too Much Sex-Stuff" to quell the growing conviction among "professional reformers and agitators" that producers alone were

[23] This was the title of the first film history, Terry Ramsaye, *A Million and One Nights* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1954, rpt. 1925). Ramsaye considered anti-Semitism partially responsible for the industry's postwar troubles, even as his history shaped the mould for considering these men good-hearted, but nonetheless Orientalist, internationalists spinning tales in a "new Baghdad," 482, 833-4. For an account of the influence of anti-Semitism on the industry focused on the 1930s and 1940s see, Steven Carr, *Hollywood and Anti-Semitism* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001). See also Neal Gabler, *An Empire of Their Own; How the Jews Invented Hollywood* (New York: Crown Publisher, Inc., 1988). Gabler considers anti-Semitism an underlying cause for all the major producers' behavior and the particular vision of America they created on screens. This popular history is very suggestive, but uses little evidence beyond general psycho-analytic assumptions. Most strangely, by making Jewish producers seem to control every nuance on screens, his discussion oddly seems to support the kind of paranoid perception of the time.

responsible for the new emphasis on sexually immoral pictures.[24] According to Hampton, producers more powerful than him had been "too busy with the day's work" to notice the growing attacks upon them. And certainly, by 1921, anyone who followed the national news would have found it difficult to ignore how the debate over immigration restriction revealed a new willingness to treat Jewish immigrants as a new kind of threat. In explaining this phenomenon, historian John Higham has pointed to the unexpected consequences of the war. "The struggle with Germany," writes Higham, "called forth the most strenuous nationalism *and* the most pervasive nativism the United States had ever known."[25] After declaring war in April 1917, Wilson's administration authorized an unprecedented crackdown on any who criticized the move, lending tacit support to the citizens' groups proclaiming with evangelical fervor a new brand of nationalism: "100 percent Americanism."[26] These 100 per-centers equated a crushing conformity and total, unquestioned adherence to the government's objectives with patriotism. After the peace the crusade for 100 percent Americanism continued with unabated force, finding new alien, un-American targets on which to settle, "making World War I," according to Higham, "a major turning point in American nativism."[27]

Much like debates about controlling Hollywood, debates over immigration restriction played to symbolic fears more than reasoned objections. "MUST STOP ALIEN INFLUX; Ellis Island Commissioner Avers Flow of Immigrant Labor

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[24] Hampton, *A History of the Movies*, 290. See also, "Should American Pictures Be Censored?" *Current Opinion* (May 1921): 652-5. Hampton made this claim here for the first time and the piece credited his "sensational article" with prompting the controversy.
[25] John Higham, *Strangers in the Land* (New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 1994 ed.), 195. Italics in the original. For more on how the war altered the texture of American nationalism and nativism, see chap. 6, "War and Revolution."
[26] Ibid., 204-12.
[27] Ibid., 222.

Dangerous" screamed a *Los Angeles Daily Times* headline; the *Brooklyn Daily Eagle* ominously predicted, "GROWING U.S. MUST CHOOSE JAP, JEW OR ITALIAN CITIZENS."[28] Both headlines conveyed the dialogue's shrill tenor. Metaphors of natural disaster striking the nation predominated. Faith in special "Americanization" efforts—designed "to hasten the assimilative process, to heat and stir the melting pot"—collapsed.[29] Near the end of 1920, the chairmen of the House Committee on Immigration, Albert Johnson, proposed "a genuine 100% American immigration law" that would halt immigration entirely for two years.[30] Only a dam against the "flood of undesirable aliens" might stop "the toboggan slide" of "the white race," the Senate immigration chairman declared.[31] A last minute report commissioned by Johnson claimed that Jewish immigrants from central and eastern Europe dominated the arrivals and characterized them as "'abnormally twisted,'" "'unassimilable,'" and "'filthy, un-American, and often dangerous in their habits.'"[32] Appended to Johnson's proposal, the report exaggerated the potential number of immigrants, predicting that "'five million Polish Jews would attempt to immigrate to America during the next three years." The estimate, a *Nation* reporter noted with bemusement, was "50% above the total number of the Jews in Poland."[33] The Senate defeated Johnson's all-out ban, but a quota measure "to check the flow from southern and eastern Europe without hindering the movement

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[28] *LAT*, January 6, 1921, pt I, p. 3; *BDE*, February 1, 1921, 4.
[29] "Alien Propaganda Defeating Efforts at Americanization," *BDE*, February 20, 1921, 1. On the development and demise of such efforts, see Higham, chap. 9.
[30] Johnson quoted in Higham, 309.
[31] "Flood," quoting Senate Immigration Committee Chairman Colt, *BDE*, February 9, 1921, 1; "'toboggan slide,'" quoting Colorado Representative Valle, a member of the House Committee on Immigration, *LAT*, January 16, 1921, 1.
[32] Quoted in Higham, 309. For more on the report, see Robert Fink, "Visas, Immigration and Official Anti-Semitism," *The Nation* (May 4, 1921): 870-3.
[33] Fink, "Visas, Immigration, and Official Anti-Semitism," 872.

from northern and western Europe" easily passed in February 1921—just as Hampton's first article in *Pictorial Review* hit the stands.[34] According to Higham, the reporting on such efforts led many to conclude "the chief purpose of the immigration law of 1921 was to keep out the Jews."[35]

Viewing Jews as a particular threat was largely a new idea in America.[36] The tiny number of German Jewish immigrants who traveled among the larger group of their compatriots in the mid-nineteenth century drew little attention, some earning a share of the economic and political clout wielded by the Anglo-Saxon Protestant elite.[37] German Jews encountered increasing social discriminations as the century wore on; the arrival of large number of Jews among the new immigrants after 1890 complicated matters further. New immigrant Jews fled mounting persecution, rising oppression, and mass murder in all parts of eastern and central Europe. Often Yiddish speaking, much poorer, and from orthodox religious backgrounds, their folkways, dress, and concentrated settlement in the poorest of urban neighborhoods visibly marked them as outsiders. But the perception

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[34] Senator Dillingham's report by the Senate Immigration Committee quoted in "New Immigration Measure," *BDE*, February 15, 1921, 1. For details about The Dillingham Bill, see *BDE*, "Senate Adopts Bill to Stem Tide of Aliens," February 20, 1921, 1. The bill easily passed both Houses to meet a pocket veto from the lame-duck Wilson reported in *BDE*, "Immigration Bill and Army Budget Get 'Pocket Veto,'" March 3, 1921, 1. After Harding took office, the bill became law in May, 1921.

[35] Higham, 310.

[36] See Ira Katznelson, "Between Separation and Disappearance: Jews on the Margins of American Liberalism," in Pierre Birnbaum and Katznelson, eds., *Paths of Emancipation* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1995), chap. 6.

[37] On the social separation but shared business and political terrain of Germans Jews and Protestant elites in New York City, see Irving Howe, *World of Our Fathers* (New York: Harcourt, 1976), 80; Thomas Kessner, *The Golden Door* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1977), 37, 61-3, 168. For a similar portrait of San Francisco, see William Issel and Robert W. Cherny, *San Francisco* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1986), 16-7; 204-8. On Atlanta, see Steven Hertzberg, *Strangers Within the Gate City* (Philadelphia: Jewish Publication Society of America, 1978).

that Jews posed a particular threat was also peculiarly tied to how the overheated nationalism of the postwar period helped to revivify and twist old stereotypes—about Jews as permanent outsiders and parasitic moneylenders with a taste for despoiling Gentile women and wielding power from behind the scenes—into new shapes.[38] *Current Opinion* called "the strength and intensity of the new movement of anti-Semitism" in the U.S. "one of the unexpected results of the war," adding "there is almost something uncanny about the way in which it goes forward."[39] Holding anti-Semitism "one of the most curious specimens" of "all the dirty spawn germinated in the refuse left by the Great War," an editorial tied its spread to the public's fondness for "deep laid plots and melodramatic schemes of universal conquest."[40] "The after-the-war imagination plays busily about the Jew. Books, magazine articles, newspaper editorials, the talk of the man on the street, figure him as a sort of Mephistopheles of the peoples."[41]

Out of the Heartland came one of the most nightmarish postwar melodramas about Jews' use of their commercial power to spread immorality to even the nation's smallest hamlet. The revelation of a secret Jewish plot to control what people thought and bought the world over was the purpose of an ongoing series published in *The Dearborn Independent*, a general magazine operated by the "Flivver King": Henry Ford. Ford's claim to folk hero status was indisputable by the time he launched an investigation of "The Jewish Question" that detailed the threat *The International Jew, The World's*

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[38] On these stereotypes and the international postwar rise in anti-Semitism, see Albert S. Lindemann, *Anti-Semitism before the Holocaust* (Edinburgh Gate: Pearson Education Ltd., 2000), chap. 4, "War, Revolution, Fascism."
[39] "Trailing the New Anti-Semitism to Its Russian Lair," *Current Opinion* (April 1921): 501.
[40] Frank Crane, "The Jew," *Current Opinion* (May 1921): 596.
[41] "Jewry at the End of the War," *The Nation*. May 4, 1921, 677

Foremost Problem posed to "all that Anglo-Saxons mean by civilization."[42] A farmer's son with little formal education, Ford's success derived from his command of the qualities that many Americans most prized: a bent for tinkering that produced mechanical innovation, a genius for efficiency, and a will to conquer space by harnessing speed. Estimated as one of America's richest men by 1920, Ford's concern about the direction the modern world was heading had prompted him to enter politics. His first major foray involved funding a 1915 "Peace Ship" to Europe to stop a war he believed "money lenders and munitions makers" had engineered.[43] The endeavor drew ridicule in much of the press; its failure seems to have precipitated his repudiation of any venture with a whiff of cosmopolitanism.[44] After narrowly losing Michigan's 1918 Democratic senatorial race, he purchased the *Dearborn Independent*, declared it the "Chronicler of Neglected Truth," and set out to educate "plain Americans" about the dangers encroaching on their country.[45] A *New York World* reporter brought in to reverse the paper's anemic sales advised: "Find an evil to attack, go after it, and stay after it."[46]

Now America's most popular industrialist devised a melodramatic narrative about *The International Jew* that entwined the postwar sex panic about the movie industry's product and social environment with a race panic over the men who sat atop its industrial

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[42] *The International Jew, The World's Foremost Problem,* being a reprint of a series of articles appearing in the Dearborn independent from May 22 to October 1920 (Dearborn: Dearborn Publishing Co., 1920), 6.
[43] Ford, quoted in Ibid., 48.
[44] On the response to the peace ship, see "The Ford Peace Party," in the New York Legislature's *Revolutionary Radicalism; Being the Report of the Joint Legislative Committee Investigating Seditious Activities, Vol. 1* (Albany: J.B. Lyon Company, 1920), 988-9.
[45] Ford, quoted in Neil Baldwin, *Henry Ford and the Jews* (New York: Public Affairs, 2001), 77. On attempts to get Ford into public office, see Ibid., 68-70.
[46] Joseph Jefferson O'Neill, quoted in Ibid., 91.

structure.[47] The Jewish Question began with a conclusion: Jews were bent on world dominance because of innate racial characteristics. At every point, articles exhibited the same style of argument. The Question was really an assertion that drew its power from narrative repetition of "facts" framed as common knowledge, rather than the display of evidence.[48] Ford's attack in the *Independent* was scientific racism for Americans not inclined to wade through hundreds of pages of intellectual jargon and pour over historical "race maps." Jews' characteristics as race—a "gift" for all things "commercial" rather than "productive or technical"—rendered them unable to create and determined their natural place as administrators of finance capitalism.[49] Thus race drove the melodramatic narrative described: Jews orchestrated a war to pit "two forces, Industry and Finance"—Gentile and Jew—against one another in "a struggle to see whether Finance is again to become the master, or creative industry."[50] Racial solidarity also explained why, however different the political viewpoints or interests of Jews appeared, all participated

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[47] The *Independent* ran 92 successive articles on *The International Jew*. "Selections" were quickly reprinted in what eventually became the four volume set of *The International Jew*. Estimates of *Independent* sales vary, usually between 250,000 to 500,000 between 1920 and 1922. All Ford dealerships were forced to sell the paper, even after boycotts in cities began to hurt the businesses of many. The articles were more widely distributed in the volumes, with an estimated ten million copies sold and distributed in the U.S. through the 1920s. Ford was not interested in making a profit in the venture. He accepted no advertising and paid for the reprints and translations into other languages. See Albert Lee, *Henry Ford and the Jews* (New York: Stein and Day, 1980), 14; Baldwin, 146.

[48] The rhetoric revolved around constructions like, "Everybody knows," or "as is commonly known."

[49] "The Jew in Character and Business" in *The International Jew, The World's Foremost Problem,*10. Originally published May 22, 1920.

[50] "The Jewish Question—Fact or Fancy?" in n *The International Jew, The World's Foremost Problem,* 53. Originally published, June 12, 1920.

in a struggle to destroy the Gentile world.[51] Race also justified attacking Jewish individuals whose accomplishments marked them as victors "in the competitive struggle," an achievement that Ford, and many Americans, had long equated with moral fitness. Jewish success in America was not "won by individual initiative; it was rather the extension of financial control across the sea."[52]

The *Independent* explained to "plain Americans" that Jews financial command over the "cultural regions" displayed the most compelling evidence of *Jewish Activities in the United States*.[53] Their influence extended from popular music and sports to the theater and movies to "the very news that people read."[54] Since such activities penetrated "the very heart of American life," the nation had become "the center of Jewish power." Exerting power over the culture industries from behind the scenes allowed Jews to orchestrate the performances of others who enacted their "program for the guidance of public taste and the influencing of the public mind" and to foment changes in manners

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[51] Ibid., 46-7. The article contains the most complete description: He "rules not because he is rich, but because in a most marked degree he possesses the commercial and masterful genius of his race, and avails himself of a racial loyalty and solidarity the like of which exists in no other human group."

[52] "The Jew in Character and Business" in *The International Jew, The World's Foremost* Problem, 12. See also, "The Jewish Question—Fact or Fancy?" in *The International Jew, The World's Foremost Problem*, 52-3.

[53] Discussions of Ford's attack have ignored the focus of the *Independent* on the alleged cultural power of Jews. Articles in later volumes would not only circle back to these particular "regions," but would take up the Question in baseball and Jazz music and publishing. "Preface," *Jewish Activities in the United States*; vol. II of *The International Jew*, being a reprint of a second selection from articles appearing in the Dearborn independent from October 9, 1920, to March 19, 1921 (Dearborn: Dearborn Publishing Co., 1921), 6.

[54] "'Jewish' Plan to Split Society by 'Ideas," *Jewish Activities in the United States*; vol. II, 143. Originally published, August 14, 1920.

and morals that had built to the exploding point after the war.[55] The most significant lairs from which Jews directed this battle were the stage and motion pictures. "Not only the 'legitimate' stage, so-called, but the motion picture industry—the fifth greatest of all the great industries" were "Jew-controlled," the paper announced, "not in spots only, not 50 per cent merely, but entirely."[56] By the turn of the century, a "Jewish Theatrical Trust" had taken control of the stage, ruined its artistic standards, and, now that the business was in decline, sought to fulfill a more ambitious plan: to "threw the empty theaters over to the 'movies'" so they might improve the industry's prestige and give their race an inside track on its control.[57]

Despite calling the movies "a Jewish enterprise from the start," the *Independent* paused to give readers a history lesson that indicated otherwise.[58] "Motion picture photography," the paper observed, "like most other useful things in the world, was of non-Jewish origin." The question of the movies' origin raised the man commonly credited, in the U.S., with its invention: "The Wizard of Menlo Park," Thomas Edison. "The chief hero of my boyhood," a "friend in manhood," and "our greatest American," Ford said of Edison in a book he wrote about his life-long mentor.[59] The *Independent* repeated the charge that "the Jews did not invent the art of motion picture" enough to

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[55] "Jewish Supremacy in Motion Picture World," in *Jewish Activities in the United States*; vol. II, 134. Originally published February 19, 1921.
[56] "Jewish Control of the American Theater," in *Jewish Activities in the United States*; vol. II, 94. Originally published January 1, 1921.
[57] "Rise of the First Theatrical Trust," *Jewish Activities in the United States*; vol. II, 102. Originally published January 8, 1921.
[58] Ibid.
[59] Henry Ford, *Edison: As I Know Him* (New York: Cosmopolitan Book Corp., 1930), 102. On Ford and Edison's friendship and partnership see Lee, 7, 13, 42, 67-8; Baldwin, 11-2, 43, 53-4. On evidence that Edison held less virulent anti-Semitic views, see Baldwin, 89-90, 322-4.

sound like Ford carried a grudge on his behalf. Despite his image as a solitary man of science, Edison's "invention" of motion pictures consisted of directing a protracted legal wrangle to control the industry through licensing and patenting "his" camera.[60] By harassing all the major producers into joining the Motion Picture Patents Company, Edison had created the industry original Trust, the first, and as yet only, monopoly over the industry; the combine was broken in 1915 when ruled an illegal conspiracy in violation of the Sherman Antitrust Act.[61] By then, as we have seen, a group of innovative producers settling around Los Angeles had already rendered the ruling unnecessary. Independent producers and exhibitors like Carl Laemmle, Adolph Zukor, William Fox and Marcus Loew amassed enough capital to fight the Trust in court by servicing thousands of unlicensed nickelodeons outside the Patent's interest. Their embrace of the star system and feature films allowed them to increase the industry's audience, retaining the immigrants and working people who first supported the movies and adding middle class patrons. In short, according to Ford, a group of upstart, unAmerican Jews wrested control of Edison and his Anglo partners' dominion out from under them.

To educate readers about the nature of "Jewish Supremacy in the Motion Picture World," the *Independent* emphasized the extent to which Edison and his like had been

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[60] The Patents combine pooled 16 patents and included producers Edison, Biograph, Vitagraph, Essanay, Kalem, Selig, Lubin, Path Freres and Melies, and the importer George Kleine. An excellent discussion of Edison's strategy is found in Robert Sklar, *Movie-Made America* (New York: Vintage Book, 1975), chap. 3.

[61] By 1912 the Patents share of film production and importation had fallen from 100% to slightly more than half, Sklar, 37. He estimates the Patents only served half to two thirds of US theaters. For the Patents' focus on the middle class, see Nancy Rosenbloom, "Progressive Reform, Censorship, and the Motion Picture Industry, 1909-1917," in Ronald Edsforth and Larry Bennett eds., *Popular Culture and Political Change* (New York: Basic Books, 1991), 45-7.

usurped.[62] Beginning with Adolph Zukor—"conceded to be the leader of the fifth largest industry in the world"—the article rolled out the list of other "un-American" Jews heading production companies by 1921. Jewish control was not confined to "the official heads," even a "commonly supposed…non-Jewish concern" like United Artists was only a "Gentile Front" for Charlie Chaplin—transformed into a Jew—and its president Hiram Abrams. "Penetrate down through the entire organization until you come to the last exhibition of the cracked and faded film in some cut-price theater" and the articled declared readers would find "on its commercial side" the business was "Jewish through and through." Such dominance produced predictable results. "As soon as the Jew gained control of the 'movies,' we had a movie problem"; it was "the genius of that race to create problems of a moral character in whatever business they achieve a majority."[63]

According to Ford's magazine, Jews racial identity as Eastern "Orientals" explained their promotion of an "Oriental sensuality" so at odds with respectable middle class gender roles.[64] First on the stage, and then on film, Jewish control resulted in "fleshy spectacles" characterized by "frivolity, sensuality, indecency, appalling illiteracy and endless platitudes."[65] The "Oriental ideal" was "essentially different form the Anglo-Saxon, the American view."[66] "American life is bare and meager to the Eastern mind. It is not sensuous enough. It is devoid of intrigue. Its women of the homes do not play

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[62] "Jewish Supremacy in Motion Picture World," in *Jewish Activities in the United States*, vol. II, 128-30.
[63] "Jewish Control of the American Theater," in *Jewish Activities in the United States*, vol. II, 89.
[64] Ibid., 92.
[65] Ibid., 94.
[66] "The Jewish Aspect of the Movie Problem," in *Jewish Activities in the United States*, vol. II, 117.

continuously and hysterically on the sex motif."[67] In contrast to the "faith and quietness" of "American domesticity," Orientalism took things "as far as you could go," "gravitate[d] naturally to the flesh," and lived "among the more sensual emotions." "Falsity, artificiality, criminality, and jazz" were its "keynotes."[68] Those who "wonder where the ideas of the younger generation come from" need look no further: if "Oriental in their voluptuous abandonment" "the stage and the movies" had poisoned them.[69] Here lay "the whole secret of the movies' moral failure: they are not American and their producers are racially unqualified to reproduce the American atmosphere."[70]

Such a position begged an explanation as to why seemingly ever increasing numbers of "real" Americans consumed Hollywood's products. Most generally, the *Independent* charged that Jews' success in the culture industries stemmed from how Anglo-Americans, in their all long fabled innocence, had naively permitted a "filthy tide" of Orientalist sensuality to "all but engulf" "Gentile gullibles" in the audience, producing a decline in the country's "Aryan complexion of mind and conscience."[71] Yet the description of the movies' audience by Ford's paper also suggests it did not target them, but rather the adult, male middle class heads of households thought the least likely to attend—and the most likely to purchase cars. "Millions of people crowding through the

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[67] "Jewish Supremacy in Motion Picture World," in *Jewish Activities in the United States*, vol. II, 125.
[68] "The Jewish Aspect of the Movie Problem," in *Jewish Activities in the United States*, vol. II, 117.
[69] "Rise of the First Theatrical Trust," in *Jewish Activities in the United States*, vol. II, 104.
[70] "The Jewish Aspect of the Movie Problem," *Jewish Activities in the United States*, vol. II, 126.
[71] "Gullibles," "How Jews Capitalized a Protest Against Jews," in *Jewish Activities in the United States*, vol. II, 109. Originally published January 22, 1921. "Aryan," "The Jewish Aspects of the Movie Problem," in *Jewish Activities in the United States*, vol. II, 119.

doors of the movie house at all hours of the day and night, literally an unending line of human beings in every habitable corner of the land," was one ominous description of those who attended. The people who composed such crowds were not self controlled citizens, but passive folks willing to have their minds "act[ed] upon while they quiescently (sic.) wait in the darkened theater" by "ideas generated and directed by the suggestion of the screen."[72] The description of the movies' crowd echoed fears about the dangerously suggestible, feminized lower class masses and its degraded mass culture appetites that were already common in much American and European thought by the late nineteenth century.[73] And, indeed, it was "youths," "working people," and "shallow pated wives"—all commonly social groups commonly assumed to possess minds particularly vulnerable to outside suggestion—who were singled out as infected with the "'movie bug' so rampant in the country."[74] Without the powers of self control ascribed to self sufficient males, these fans had become addicts driven by "appetites" that when "whetted and encouraged" became "a mania" that "craved" "two or more pictures a day."

According to the *Independent*, because the spread of Orientalism among these groups had darkened America's sensibility rousing a movement to reform movie morals would be both more difficult, and more necessary. It was no longer possible simply to "to expose the evil to cure it…evil doers of our own general racial type could be shamed

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[72] "Jewish Supremacy in Motion Picture World," in *Jewish Activities in the United States*, vol. II, 128.

[73] Andreas Huyssen, "Modernism's Other: Mass Culture as Woman" in *After the Great Divide* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1986), chap. 4. The author describes the connection between a degraded mass culture and a feminized, commercial mass society among elites on both sides of the Atlantic.

[74] "The Jewish Aspect of the Movie Problem," *Jewish Activities in the United States*, vol. II, 131-2.

into decency or at least respectability. That method was no longer possible."[75] Additionally, many influential figures who should have led the charge against the industry were either compromised in "Gentile fronts," or by the demands of "all sorts of causes" that encouraged snuggling up to movie producers in order "to enlist them."[76] Such alarming trends meant that unless a reform movement took hold quickly Jewish movie producers would have free reign to carry out the plan detailed in *The Protocols of the Elders of Zion* which read: "'We have misled, stupefied and demoralized the youth of the Gentiles by means of education in principles and theories, patently false to us, but which we have inspired.'"[77] The goal of the "propaganda of the Jewish movie" was ultimately to inspire Anglo-Saxon Protestant youths to replace the faith of their fathers—both biological and spiritual—with Orientalism. This agenda explained why films depicted Rabbis and Catholic priests in a most "honorable attitude" while the "Protestant clergyman is still the elongated, sniveling, bilious hypocrite of anti-Christian caricature."

By 1921, according to the *Independent*, only the power of Gentile movie stars prevented Jewish producers from wielding the total control they needed to enact their plan. Accordingly, the magazine ended its investigations by focusing on the latest trend within the industry: "the abolition of the 'star' system."[78] "Not long ago," the magazine reminded readers, "the full glare of movie publicity was thrown upon names and personalities, it did not matter what the theme of the play was—suffice it that it was 'a Chaplin film' or a 'Pickford film,' or whatever it might be." Despite having "reached its

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[75] "The Jewish Aspects of the Movie Problem," in *Jewish Activities in the United States*, vol. II, 119.
[76] "The Jewish Aspect of the Movie Problem," *Jewish Activities in the United States*, vol. II, 131.
[77] Ibid., 133.
[78] Ibid., 136.

present importance because of the exaltation of the 'star,'" producers now understood that "the way to break the control which the public may exercise through such a demand" was "to eliminate the stars" and their "bloated salaries." Recognizing this, Jewish producers sought to destroy stars who had "taken the hint" and "set up their own studios." Once producers succeeded both exhibitors and the public would "have no choice because their will be no choice; the business will be a standardized 'industry.'" Then, as had happened with the theater, the "American *feel*" of the movies would give way to a standardized "dark, Oriental atmosphere."[79] Thus the final charge hurled against the industry offered a critique of industrial standardization by no less than its prophet. Ford's company had perfected the pursuit of the ideal one-size-and-low-price-fits-all product through a mode of production and a management style that clocked and regulated every conceivable aspect of human labor and choice. It is difficult not to read his writers' criticisms as either a virtuoso exercise of irony, or sheer apostasy.

As might be expected, the world took notice when virulently anti-Semitic attacks were added to the product line of the man held to be not only the premiere representative, and champion, of America's average folk and farmers, but also one of the world's most respected industrial reformers. Though "not a single paper or magazine of repute" had backed Ford's campaign, a reporter in *Current Opinion* observed "the movement still continues to excite nation-wide attention."[80] Frank Crane, the liberal Protestant minister and editor who had championed Yezierska's stories, deplored Ford's attack, as an

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[79] "Jewish Control Over the American Theater," in *Jewish Activities in the United States*, vol. II, 89.

[80] "Trailing the New Anti-Semitism to Its Russian Lair," *Current Opinion* (April 1921): 501. After addressing Ford's tirades in the *Independent*, the article attempted to establish the *Protocols* as forgeries.

example of the kind of "Jew hating" which was of "constant quantity in Europe"—and had suddenly taken root in America.[81] An open letter in *The New York Times* signed by "citizens of Gentile birth and Christian faith," including former Presidents Wilson and Taft, deplored the appearance "of an organized campaign of anti-Semitism, conducted in close conformity to and cooperation with similar campaigns in Europe."[82] Such responses displayed how openly anti-Semitic views were still beyond the pale of "polite" conversation—at least among those who considered themselves part of the respectable, educated elite. Jewish leaders and writers in the U.S. were divided both about the best response to Ford's attacks and what larger significance to attribute to them.[83] Most shared the sense that it was tied to a broader trend of "Jew-baiting" fueled by the war's demand for 100% patriotism.[84] New York Congressman Fiorella LaGuardia had no trouble assessing the effect of Ford's work, declaring his "wealth and ignorance" had made possible "a nefarious warfare against the Jews."[85]

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[81] Crane, "The Jew," *Current Opinion*, 596.
[82] "A Protest Against Anti-Semitism," *The New York Times*, January 16, 1921, 30-1. (hereafter *NYT*)
[83] For more on the quandary that Ford's attacks created among Jewish leaders, see Baldwin, 192-217.
[84] For two examples of this view, see Louis Weitzenkorn, "A Jew Among the Fords," *The Nation* (May 4, 1921): 652-3; Ralph Philip Boas, "Jew-Baiting in America," *The Atlantic Monthly* (May 1921): 658-65.
[85] La Guardia, quoted in Thomas Kessner, *Fiorello H. La Guardia* (New York: McGraw-Hill Publishing Company, 1989), 125-6. For an indication of how little the campaign affected his stature, see "The Formidability of Ford," *The Literary Digest* (June 16, 1923): 8-9. On the central place that "Fordism" occupied in the postwar international reform imagination, see Daniel T. Rodgers, *Atlantic Crossings* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1998), 371-81.

An editorial in *Photoplay* disputed the notion that Jews controlled what appeared on screens.[86] In a juxtaposition that Ford might have argued proved his point, *Photoplay*'s editor, James Quirk, ran a piece called "Oh, Henry!" opposite an article exploring "VAMPS OF ALL TIMES; As Seen When a Modern Spotlight is Turned upon Ancient Legends." The "magazine holds no brief for the family of Israel," Quirk avowed. Yet he still "publicly resent[ed]" any "form of condemnation which denounces a whole people" as "an insult to contemporary intelligence" and "a menace to civilization." Upending Ford's attack, Quirk declared "Jewish bankers and business men" precedence "in the financial end of the picture business" "a sign of its institutional soundness." Quirk marshaled stereotypes about Jews predating those peddled by Ford to substantiate his point. "The Jew from time immemorial has been given to trade and barter and finance," reminding readers that he had been "the man behind the artist—frequently to his own profit, but sometimes quite the reverse—for more than a hundred years." Finally, Quirk offered the collaborative nature of making movies, and fans' estimation of their own good taste, as the best evidence against Ford's charges. "The Christian, so-called, has a monopoly on everything except photoplay finance," he declared. Equally crucial, Quirk contended that "an art that caters to the public taste more than all the other arts of the world together" could not produce "low-class pictures" or be controlled by any one group "for a single day." In assuring readers that Jews had

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[86] James R Quirk, 'Oh, Henry!" *Photoplay* (June 1921): 44. All quotes this paragraph, Ibid. One editorial suggested that some insiders in the business shared Ford's views. "Family quarrels should be fought in public—a principle which obviously is not being subscribed to by certain persons in the industry who are supplying information for Henry Ford's attack upon the business. These persons may think they are operating secretly, but they are wrong…." See *Exhibitors Herald* (December 1921): 30.

no involvement in shaping what appeared on screens, Quirk's defense seemed almost to endorse Ford's claim that such an event would have been a threat to fans.

Certainly the second Ku Klux Klan, a social movement that burst onto the American scene between 1920 and 1921, wholeheartedly endorsed Ford's ideas about the dangerous influence that Jewish produced movies posed to American sexual morality—and particularly to Gentile girls.[87] Alone among industrialists, Ford escaped the indictment of Klan newspaper writers and leaders who revered "the genuine Americanism" of the anti-Semitic Flivver King.[88] Resurrected in Atlanta in 1915, membership in the Klan languished at a few thousand in January 1920.[89] Over 1921, the number of members rose to more than one million.[90] The first Klan had been a sectional body that accepted any white man willing to terrorize formerly enslaved black men in order to restore white supremacy throughout the South.[91] The second Klan accepted only native-born, white Protestant men, heavily drawing recruits from the lower middle in

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[87] My view of the Klan owes the most to Nancy MacLean, *Behind the Mask of Chivalry* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1994). MacLean characterizes the movement as part of the broader the transnational reactionary populist movements that erupted following the War that used nationalism, racism, and calls to restore traditional gender roles to heal class divisions. Most current work on the Klan focuses on its role as "a popular social movement, not an extremist organization," addressing "real social problems" rather than "symbolic or imaginary fears," Leonard J Moore, "Historical Interpretations of the 1920s Klan," *Journal of Social History* 24.2 (1990): 352, 348.
[88] Quoted in MacLean., 90, 136. According to the author this happened continually. MacLean calls Ford a Klansman but offers no evidence for the charge. On the persistent rumors of Ford's involvement and financial support, see also Kenneth T. Jackson, *The Ku Klux Klan and the City* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1967), 274 ftnt. 21.
[89] Because the Klan destroyed most of its records it is impossible to say how many participants joined with certainty. Here, I follow what appear to be the rather conservative estimates in MacLean, 5; Jackson, 4-8.
[90] MacLean, 5; Jackson, 11-2. After 1923, women were organized in the WKKK.
[91] On the original Ku Klux Klan, see Eric Foner, *Reconstruction* (New York: Harper & Row, 1988).

cities and towns across the nation.[92] Building on the war's patriotic fervor, the twenties Klan became an Anglo-Saxon nationalist order that promised to restore influence to those who believed "their" country was slipping away from their control.[93] It preached white supremacy, Christianity, and "pure Americanism" to distinguish members from the foreign, cosmopolitan influences emanating from above and below. It offered a moral realignment and vigilante actions to discipline those associated with the city's corrosive modernity: New Negroes, Jews, Catholics, monopolists, labor radicals, boot-leggers, erring wives, itinerant husbands, "wild women" in short skirts, divorcees, commercial popular culture—and especially "degrading, depraving, or disgusting" movies.[94]

Even as the Klan attacked the corrosive moral influence of the movies and their makers, its leaders used both films and other tools of modern propaganda to inflame anxieties about the threat that these elements posed to "home defense," "the social structure and racial purity."[95] Two publicity agents employed in 1920 hired a staff of experienced organizers to sound such themes, seizing on melodramas propagated by both the *Independent* and D.W. Griffith's *Birth of a Nation* to propagandize their cause.[96] Re-released in December 1920, Griffith's acclaimed film provided a touchstone, and central recruiting device, for the second Klan. Based on Thomas Dixon's novel, *The Clansman—An Historical Romance of the Ku Klux Klan*, *Birth* recounted how the Klan had saved the South and reunited the nation by deposing dastardly mulatto politicians and

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[92] On the profile of Klan members in Georgia see, MacLean, 54-65; in urban areas, Jackson, 238-42.
[93] On its platform, see MacLean, 23-51.
[94] *Kourier*, quoted in Ibid., 113.
[95] Klan advertising quoted in Ibid., 98, 104. On the rhetoric of home defense, see 98-124.
[96] On Mary Elizabeth Tyler and Edward Young Clarke of the Southern Publicity, see Ibid., 5-7.

lynching black predators driven to rape white womanhood. The masterfully constructed historical melodrama explained the movement's heroism, strengthened members' solidarity, and inflamed others to don the nightriders' white robes.[97]

As members rallied in movie theaters across the country, Klan papers and leaders used Ford's prestige and the *Independent*'s stories to create a virtually duplicate narrative about the danger that Jewish control over the culture industries—and particularly the movie industry—posed to the moral purity of the American womanhood and the home.[98] According to Klan publications and spokesmen, the best domestic example of the "Cosmopolitanism advocated by International Jewry" lay in how the "Jew-produced motion pictures industry and the Jew-monopolized jazz music" had "submerge[d]" Gentile youths "in a sea of sensuality and sewage."[99] Here lay the inspiration for the sexually suggestive fashions and "amatory and erotic tendencies" of young women, Klan leaders explained. Believing that "all Protestant girls are common property and can be bought for song," as one Klan paper wrote, Jewish employers underpaid working girls, seduced them with trinkets, and then abandoned them like "an old worn-out coat."[100] Such a charge had obvious implications for perceptions about the threat posed to all the pretty, assumedly Gentile, "extra-girls" streaming into Los Angeles to find work in the studios. Like the story told in *Birth*, the narrative the Klan created to explain Jewish men's place at the top of the list of racial enemies turned on the sexual threat they posed

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[97] On Tyler's and Clarke's use of *Birth* in recruitment drives and as a rallying point for local chapter throughout 1921-2, see Jackson, 70, 81, 118, 131, 200; MacLean, 12-3.
[98] MacLean, 135-8. According to MacLean, the Klan's open, virulent anti-Semitism and violent intimations "helped differentiate Klansmen from more mainstream white supremacists," 135.
[99] Ibid., "Cosmopolitanism," 138; "Jew produced," 144; "submerge," 113.
[100] *Imperial Night Hawk*, quoted in Ibid, 145.

to the purity of white womanhood. Black men's bestial strength, their inhuman vigor and carnality, drove them to rape and required a horde of white-masked men to restrain them. Jewish men's cunning, covetous natures allowed them to infiltrate economic structures and then manipulate women into sexually degrading themselves. Only "strict censorship," Imperial Wizard Hiram Evans observed in 1921, would "keep the Jew controlled stage and movies within even gunshot of decency."[101]

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Open, virulent anti-Semitism distinguished the rhetoric used by the Klan and Ford's *Independent* from other film censorship campaigns that erupted after 1919. Yet these extreme manifestations made the subtler, more "polite" expressions of anti-Semitism in the critiques offered by some of the industry's more longstanding critics sound reasonable by comparison. The public condemnation of Ford's attack by leading Americans indicated how open, unabashed anti-Semitism still lay outside the boundaries of respectable speech. Instead, in making the case for federal censorship, reformers like Ellis Oberholtzer, Reverend Wilbur Crafts and Canon William Chase expressed their anti-Semitism in more polite code, arguing the problem with Hollywood's "sex pictures" lay with the "perversity" of the "degenerate" producers who now controlled the picture business. Well practiced at getting the attention of the media, the narratives of these reformers seeped into news stories over the course of 1921. New drives for censorship launched in New York and by the General Federation of Women's Clubs (GFWC) also testified to heightened concerns about related fears: that the "un-American" sexual morality that dominated the industry's postwar product was giving youths the wrong

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[101] Grand Wizard Evans, quoted in Ibid., 144.

ideas. The debates surrounding these campaigns displayed how easily regulating the industry became entwined with another controversial subject in the early the twenties: where women's emancipation after their 1920 enfranchisement might lead next.

"Undoubtedly one of the most important national events that will have its effect on the moral standard of the country is the enfranchising of our women," declared John Sumner in an article that elaborated just such fears.[102] Sumner, the Secretary of the New York Society for the Suppression of Vice, declared that "two paths" lay before women in 1921. Women could either join "with the men to make better laws for herself and her children," or join together and assert themselves "along lines of sex antagonism" that would "breakdown the moral fiber of the nation." Those like Sumner wrote to extol motion picture regulation as the ideal activity to absorb women's reform activities in the postwar period. Yet, like many other press accounts, he used the moment to speculate about the "sex warfare" that would result were women to ignore such advice.[103] "Will the Next War Be Women Against Men?" asked the headline of one story in this vein.[104] Charges about women's pursuit of so-called "sex partisan politics"—like more liberal divorce laws, birth control, and an Equal Rights Amendment—often resembled or were entwined with critiques about the moral effects films produced on young women. According to Sumner, the ultimate goal of these "women who are openly antagonistic to men and 'man made' laws and conventions" resembled one of the central effects of

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[102] John Sumner, "Are American Morals Disintegrating?" *Current Opinion* (May 1921): 608-11.

[103] New York Governor Miller quoted in "Are Women a Menace?" *The Nation* (February 9, 1921): 198. Fredrick Boyd Stevenson, "Marriage and Divorce Equally Easy Under the New Law In Red Russia," *BDE*, March 27, 1921, women, 1; "Absolute Equality for Women," *BDE*, February 17, 1921, 6.

[104] "Will the Next World War Be Woman Against Men?" *San Francisco Chronicle*, May 9, 1920, Magazine Section, 1.

Hollywood's films and social environment: to create for "modern woman still greater sex freedom…a 'single standard:' meaning the standard of moral laxity attributed to men."[105]

By the end of the war, signs of the "Sex War" developing over motion picture regulation had become increasingly evident in the work of practically all the municipal and state film censorship boards where "immorality and obscenity" had become the "keywords" that defined their efforts.[106] The case of the Pennsylvania Censorship Commission and its censors in the postwar period illustrated the trend. The Pennsylvania law that created the commission in 1915 set the pattern followed by the three other state censor boards in existence in 1921.[107] A provision requiring that a woman "well qualified by experience and education" serve as its vice-president displayed the necessity of using respectable women's supposedly morally superior antennae to identify threats.[108] Indeed, the commission's stated objective was to prevent gender roles and sexual conventions from further change in order to protect "the family in its present form."[109] Twenty-four "standards" attempted to spell-out specific violations of this goal—and two-thirds of them focused on scenes, stories, or images that would be "disapproved" because

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[105] Sumner, "Are American Morals Disintegrating?" *Current Opinion*, 608.
[106] Lee Grieveson, "Not Harmless Entertainment," in Charles Keil and Shelley Stamp, eds., *American Cinema's Transitional Era* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2004), 272. See also the evidence that follows.
[107] Four states had censorship laws at the start of 1921: Pennsylvania, Ohio, Kansas, and Maryland. Pennsylvania was the first state to pass a state censorship law in 1911, but problems with the act and lack of funds prevented its operation until 1915. William Sheafe Chase, "Catechism on Motion Pictures in Inter-State Commerce," pamphlet published by the New York Civic League, October, 1922, 3rd ed., 38-9.; Ruth Inglis, *Freedom of the Movies* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1947), 70-1.
[108] On how all four state boards required the employment of women, see Ellis Oberholtzer, *The Morals of the Movie* (Philadelphia: The Penn Publishing Press, 1922), 70-1.
[109] Donald Ramsaye Young, "Motion Pictures; A Study in Social Legislation," (Ph.D. thesis, University of Pennsylvannia, 1922), 16-8, 65. A copy of the "Standards of the Pennsylvania Board of Censors" is included in Appendice C, 94-99.

of their sexually improper or immoral character.[110] These standards clustered around three aspects of immorality. The first censored criminal sexual acts committed by men against women, women seduced, assaulted, betrayed, or forced into "white slavery." The second cluster depicted women whose embrace of new social conventions signaled their moral corruption: drunk women, smoking women, "sensual kissing and lovemaking," nude or "unduly exposed" bodies, and "lewd and immodest dancing." The final cluster involved pictures that displayed the kinds of sexual practices among marital partners that some thought were imperiling both the nation and the home: divorce, adultery, 'birth control,' abortion, and 'race suicide.' The Commission was also to censor pictures "showing the modus operandi of criminals," but its standards, and work, displayed its focus on maintaining traditional middle class sexual standards.

The Pennsylvania Censorship Commission's chairman, Ellis Oberholtzer, Ph.D., offered testimony before the Chicago Motion Picture Commission in 1919 that suggested why censorship critics charged that sexual "immorality" was in the eye of the beholder. "Looking at pictures you judge them instinctively," he explained, "You know whether such a thing is permissible or not; you feel it somehow or other…then you look to the standard and try to find a reason for it afterwards."[111] Such admissions also helped to explain why Oberholtzer became a lightening rod for the political controversy surrounding the question of censorship in the postwar period. An historian, he claimed to have reluctantly relinquished the quiet of a library and work on his multi-volume *History of the United States Since the Civil War* to answer Pennsylvania Governor Sproule's call

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[110] Ibid., 212-5.
[111] Oberholtzer, quoted in Raymond J. Haberski Jr., *It's Only a Movie!* (Lexington: University of Kentucky Press, 2001), 42.

to serve as the commission's first chairman.[112] In 1918, Pennsylvania's decision to condemn outright *Old Wives for New*—the first of the "salacious divorce and sex plays" directed by Cecil B. DeMille—prompted heated debate over the antidemocratic implications of allowing five people to decide what tens of thousands could watch.[113] The next year Oberholtzer declared the fight a matter of "us versus them" and took to the public lecture circuit not only to defend censorship, but to propagandize its growing necessity.[114] When mounting controversy over his work caused the governor to remove him from office, Oberholtzer became a full-time activist to promote federal regulation, pamphleteering and writing articles in two high profile reform periodicals between 1920 and 1921 which he quickly expanded into *The Morals of the Movie*.[115]

The book had one objective: to convince readers that now only federal censorship could control "the magnitude of the evil" presented by the industry's new "Sex Pictures" and the producers who made them.[116] According to Oberholtzer, the *Morals of the Movie* had dramatically declined since he had started his job in 1915. The industry's "physical sense," including "'finer theatres and more perfect technical results,'" had improved with

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[112] Oberholtzer, 6. Ellis Paxson Oberholtzer, *A History of the United States Since the Civil War* 3 v. (New York: MacMillan Co., 1917). Oberholtzer would go on to add to more volumes, covering the years through 1901.

[113] "Women Join Fight For Clean Movies," *BDE*,, March 3, 1921, 7. On response to the film, see Sumiko Higashi, "The New Woman and Consumer Culture," in Jennifer M. Bean and Diane Negra eds., *A Feminist Reader in Early Cinema* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2002), 316.

[114] Haberski, 43.

[115] See Ellis Oberholtzer, "Censor and the 'Movie Menace,'" *The North American Review* 212 (November 1920): 641-7; Ellis Oberholtzer, "What Are the Movies Making of Our Children?" *The World's Work* 41 (January 1921): 249-23. Both warned Americans of the growing danger of films to youths and impugned producers' motives. *The Morals of the Movie* was an elaboration of these ideas. On these journals importance, see Rodgers, 66-7. On the controversy surrounding Oberholtzer's decisions, see Chase, "Catechism of Motion Pictures in Interstate Commerce," 14, 63.

[116] Oberholtzer, *The Morals of the Movie*, 6-7.

"truly astonishing rapidity," but the "'dramatic in the movies" had "'gone back.'"[117] "Sex," opened the chapter, "Sex Pictures," had become the "one potently dominant idea in the minds of the men who are gambling in the public taste."[118] This deterioration required regulators of his "class" and "moral opinions" to protect the movies' masses of fans from the displays of murder, incest, and seduction that a select few commonly watched on the legitimate stage.[119] "We shall have a care for what costs three dollars on Broadway," he admitted, "but infinitely more concern for what is simultaneously shown for a few cents in a thousand places, in hamlet and crossway in all parts of the land."[120] More was at stake than simply protecting the sexual morality of those at home. "The standards of production established by the manufacturers of the United States," he reminded readers, were becoming "the standards of the world."[121]

The former censor declared the escalation of "'sex rot'" and "motion pictures infected with diseases of the erotic imagination" simply "the producers' problem."[122] Like the narratives spun out by the *Independent* or the Klan, Oberholtzer charged that the root of the problem lay with how a few producers controlling the new movie "trust" had taken the place of the "liquor business" as "the most corrupt of the forces now active in the debauchery of the public conscience."[123] Cunning foes, movie producers pretended to "revile 'politics' and yet enter it with their riches to pollute and corrupt [its] sources" in

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[117] Ibid., 15, 18.
[118] Ibid., 31.
[119] Ibid., 7.
[120] Ibid., 29.
[121] British Censors' Report, quoted in Ibid., 59.
[122] Ibid., 27, 28, 29.
[123] Ibid., 173.

order to exploit their "wares without holiness or grace."[124] Though he stopped short of outright declaring that the problem with the movies' sexual morality lay with the Jewishness of producers, the mingling of moral pollution, economic power, and godlessness in his description suggested this was the case. Oberholtzer also charged that producers had fooled the public by "disseminat[ing] the impression" that the "so-called National Board" in New York already regulated the content of films.[125] Working in cooperation with producers and funded by them, the National Board of Review (NBR) allowed the industry to air "the dirty linen of New York City" before the country, tempting fans with "wickedness that they have heard about but have never seen."[126] According to Oberholtzer, the worst consequence of the front the NBR formed for the producers was how it had "become a mere blind, a ruse to beguile film reformers, particularly organizations of women, who have so real and steadfast an interest in the character of picture exhibitions for the sake of their children."[127]

Thus, much like Hampton, Oberholtzer emphasized how critical clubwomen were to reforming *The Morals of the Movie*. Throughout the book the censor detailed and lauded women reformers' efforts, declaring them natural allies in the fight to control both the social chaos he associated with "Bolshevia" and the "producers" who "cover[ed] the country with immoral pictures" to fill "their money sacks."[128] The former censor went so far as to dedicate his book to the Pennsylvania Commission's vice president, "Kathrerine A. Niver, my comrade in arms in the thin red line." In the two decades after the turn of

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[124] Ibid., 41, 155.
[125] Ibid., 157-8.
[126] Ibid., 52-3.
[127] Ibid., 158.
[128] Ibid., 98-9; 29. For Oberholtzer's description of club women's efforts see particularly chaps. 4 and 5.

the century, many women like Niver used conventions about the differences between the sexes—that linked middle class white women's place within the domestic sphere to their innate spiritual and moral superiority—both to distinguish their class from those above and below and to license a sometimes bewildering array of new public activities for middle class women. Such conventions helped to legitimatize what Jane Addams, one of the era's most notable reformers, called "city housekeeping."[129] Women's ability to transform private, domestic prerogatives into public authority proved most successful in matters that involved using their maternal authority to lobby the state to protect its so-called dependents, including children, youths, single mothers, and the poor.[130]

By 1920, the General Federation of Women's Clubs (GFWC) had become the largest women's organization to have benefited from mobilizing such conventions. Created in 1890 as a national association for society women's literary clubs, the GFWC had re-oriented its mission from "an old-fashioned culture club" to a clearinghouse that directed the reform activities of nearly two million elite and middle class women in myriad local clubs.[131] "We prefer Doing to Dante," declared one member in 1906, "today

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[129] Addams quoted in William Chafe, *The American Woman* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1972), 257 ftnt. 16.

[130] Works that treat the centrality of motherhood as an important organizing principle in policy during the Progressive era include, Molly Ladd-Taylor, *Mother-Work: Women, Child Welfare and the State, 1890-1930* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1994); Linda Gordon, *Pitied But Not Entitled* (New York: Free Press, 1994). For a more extensive exploration of maternalist discourse in an international context, see Seth Koven and Sonya Michel, eds., *Mothers of a New World; Maternalist Politics and the Origins of Welfare States* (Routledge: New York, 1993).

[131] GFWC president Alice Ames Winter quoted in Karen Blair, *The Clubwoman as Feminist* (New York: Holmes & Meier Publishers, 1980), 98. On the GFWC's development, see chap. 6. On how the Club's influence crested after the war, see Sheila Rothman, *Women's Proper Place* (New York: Basic Books, 1978), 65-6.

nothing but an orgy of philanthropy will satisfy us."[132] The membership of the GFWC remained largely unchanged despite its new orientation, admitting upper and middle class women from "the Anglo-Saxon race."[133] Gender, class, and ethnic conventions all converged to explain why the GFWC's members were the ideal regulators of a cultural entertainment that appealed to children, immigrants, youths, and, increasingly, their own middle class daughters. A contemporary historian of legislation effecting motion pictures expressed the rationale: "since the membership in the clubs is representative of the middle and upper strata of our population," it "must be considered as having social standards which are largely in accord with those of the general public."[134]

As late as 1918, the GFWC viewed the movie industry as no threat to public morals. An opponent of legal censorship, the organization had been an important ally of the NBR amidst the rising numbers who considered its efforts insufficient.[135] After conducting a survey of films that judged them to be "wholesome" entertainment, the Women's Municipal League in New York had helped to create the NBR in 1909.[136] The

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[132] Blair, 99.

[133] Member quoted in Ibid., 98. After much controversy over whether clubs with black women could join, the GFWC decided in 1902 that they were eligible if their state or territorial federation permitted, but quickly adopted provision that made this impossible, see Blair, 109-10. Blair also notes the class snobbery and nativism of many members.

[134] Young, 19.

[135] "Twenty States Have Censorship Bills," *Moving Picture World* (February 10, 1917): 861. The article claims this was twice as many as had ever been under consideration before. On the importance of the GFWC to the NBR's prestige and work, see Charles Matthew Feldman, *The National Board of Censorship (Review) of Motion Pictures, 1909-1922* (Windsor: Arno Press Cinema Program, 1977), 132-54.

[136] Between 1907 and 1908, the People's Institute and the Women's Municipal League conducted an investigation of movie theaters and their content that judged films basically wholesome entertainment. After New York City's mayor closed the city's movie theaters in 1908, local exhibitors asked the two organizations to evaluate films before release, precipitating the creation of the National Board of Censorship. When producers agreed to voluntarily submit films and follow the committee's recommendations its work became

NBR provided a forum for producers, exhibitors and the general public to reach a consensus about what constituted acceptable motion picture content. Clubwomen acted as the NBR's unpaid reviewers, screening the vast majority of films made, recommending changes to producers based on the organization's guidelines, and distributing a weekly bulletin of approved films across the country. Criticizing the rise of local censorship boards, a member of the GFWC's Motion Picture Committee, Mary Grey Peck, toured the country with the NBR's Committee for Better Films to lecture about why voluntary efforts to improve film content were superior to legal ones. Peck lauded the pictures for providing wholesome, cheap entertainment, making the industry "a conservator of morals," a "more serious foe" of vice "than the W.C.T.U. [Women's Christian Temperance Union] or any anti-saloon or anti-cigarette league."[137]

In 1918, the GFWC broke with the NBR and endorsed legal motion picture censorship on the state level, triggering a permanent reversal in the public's perception about the NBR's effectiveness to voluntarily regulate the content of films.[138] The GFWC's decision followed two years of study and debate after a 1916 report conducted by the Chicago Political Equality League judged the vast majority of films—films approved by the NBR—"bad" or "not worth while."[139] The results prompted the national

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national in scope. To emphasize its pro-free speech stance the organization changed in name in 1916. See Inglis, 73-82; Rosenbloom; Feldman, 4-26.

[137] Betty Shannon, "Club Women Discuss Pictures," *Moving Picture World* (June 10,1916):1855.

[138] Feldman, 139.

[139] The survey by the Chicago Political Equality League found that only 20% of 1,765 films were "good" while 21% were "bad" and 49% "not worth while," reprinted in Young, 22-4.

Federation to ask state branches to carry out similar studies.[140] All the reports indicated a serious decline in the moral content of films—a drop the NBR was unwilling to address. The results were presented to members at the GFWC's national convention in May 1918—along with a pro-censorship talk by Oberholtzer that included a reel of film scenes he had censored. After three days of heated debate, the GFWC passed a resolution that condemned voluntary efforts like the NBR, pledged to work for state censorship, and appointed Florence Butler Blanchard the new chair of the Motion Picture Committee to direct the effort.[141] A 1919 pamphlet on the need for "Censorship of Motion Pictures" that Blanchard edited shot a damning accusation at its former ally. Any "person of average intelligence" could see that the NBR simply acted as "camouflage" for the industry, spewing a "stream of literature and bulletins" that sought "to furnish well-intentioned, reform-bent ladies with 'harmless busy work'" that "befogged the thinking, befuddled, delayed, diverted, emasculated and perverted the activities of many club women honestly interested in a crusade for better motion pictures."[142] In short, these ladies were no longer willing to act the patsy for an organization run by corrupt men.

Like many of Hollywood's critics following the war, the GFWC argued that the movies were responsible for the perceived jump in delinquency among youths—the age stretching from adolescence through the early twenties. The complaint lodged by one Midwestern member against the industry expressed a central reason why: the movies emphasis on displaying the female body in public threatened to "lower the standard of

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[140] States included South Dakota, Arkansas, New York, Michigan, Rhode Island, Virginia and the four with existing boards. See Florence Butler Blanchard, "Censorship of Motion Pictures," (Chicago: Englewood Print Shop, 1919), 4-6.
[141] Ibid., 12.
[142] Ibid., 15.

womanhood, detract from womanly dignity, and corrupt the youth of the land."[143] Since critics' condemnations and the cuts of film content in this period focused more on sex than crime, the delinquents produced by films were more often figured as girls.[144] "Two thirds of girls who appear before the court, charged with immorality," claimed an activist in Ohio, "owe their misfortune to influences derived directly from the movie, either from the pictures themselves or in the 'picking up' of male acquaintances at the theater."[145] Despite the call by the GFWC, and many women, for "a single moral standard" between women and men, such judgments betrayed how the sexual double standard still shaped the perception of the moral threat posed by films.[146] The association of immorality with female delinquents testified to how the sexual double standard effectively rendered moral

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[143] Illinois Federation of Women's Clubs, quoted in Frank Luther Mott, *A History of American Magazines*, vol. 4 (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1938), 32.

[144] Of the 67 films rejected in Ohio between July 1919 and June 1921, 35 fell within the category of sex pictures. This number was nearly three times more than the number of comedies rejected in the next largest category. See *Wid's Year Book 1921* (New York and Hollywood: Wid's Films and Film Folks, Inc., 1921), 217. Cuts made in films by New York's board between August 1 and December 31, 1921 also indicated how sexual vice prompted the most excisions. 146 cuts were made on such grounds; 54 on the grounds of criminality; 40 on others. Breakdown as follows totaled: 85, "Immoral"; 35, "Inhuman"; Tending to incite Crime," 54; "Immoral or Tending to Corrupt Morals," 61; "Sacrilegious," 5. From the Report of Education Department, State of New York, Motion Picture Division, James Wingate, Director, published in William H. Short, *A Generation of Motion Pictures* (New York: National Committee for the Study of Social Values in Motion Pictures, 1978, rpt. 1928), 13, Censorship Collection, AMPAS. A report by the Chicago Motion Picture Commission revealed the majority of the material condemned between November 1917 and December 1920 was for sexual immorality, see testimony in Young, 21. For the Pennsylvania Board's focus on sexual immorality in 1917, see "Report of Pennsylvania State Board Of Censors," (Philadelphia: J.L.L Kuhn, 1917), 8.

[145] J.J. Phelan, *Motion Pictures as a Phase of Commercialized Amusement in Toledo, Ohio* (Toledo: Little Book Press, 1919), 9, Censorship Collection, AMPAS.

[146] On the GFWC's position on this, see "One Standard Favored by Women," *San Francisco Bulletin*, June 9, 1920, 9.

vice a girl problem: "'Who has ever heard of a 'fallen boy'?'" asked one social worker.[147] Thus the impact of sex pictures upon young women logically preoccupied much of their work. In uniting to confront the threat movies posed to the virtue of the nation's daughters, club women cast themselves as lionesses fending off attacks upon womanhood and as moral regulators controlling the spread of indecent material that encouraged young women to degrade themselves. The GFWC would use their own virtuous womanhood to restrain the libertine men in charge of the picture business.

A "CAMPAIGN AGAINST UNCLEAN MOVIES" in *The Brooklyn Daily Eagle* in New York put protecting "womanhood" and the involvement of clubwomen at the center of its drive.[148] If successful, the creation of a state censorship board in New York—the past hub of the industry's clout as well as its most lucrative market—would send a powerful message about its reversal of fortune. One of the City's most notable independent papers, the *Eagle* offered its largely native-born, middle class audience progressive editorial stances on issues of the day. "We have organized to fight disease germs that kill the body. Why not organize to fight the disease germs that eat into the very heart of public morals?" the "investigative reporter" writing the weekly series

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[147] Quoted in Regina Kunzel, *Fallen Women, Problem Girls* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1993), 55. Kunzel's book offers a rich exploration of the gendered nature of sex delinquency.

[148] Fredrick Boyd Stevenson, "How Brooklyn Is Getting Into Action For A Campaign Against Unclean Movies," *BDE*, February 13, 1921, women, 1. "Womanhood," Brooklyn Assemblyman W.F. Clayton, who introduced what would become the Clayton-Lusk censorship bill to legislature on February 16, 1921, quoted in, "Censor Bill Passes New York Assembly; Governor is Expected to Sign it Soon," *Moving Picture World* (April 30,1921): 936. On the bill's introduction, see "Censorship Bill is at Last Introduced in the New York Legislature," *Moving Picture World* (February 26, 1921): 1025.

demanded.[149] The series' campaign updates were placed in the Sunday section, "Music, Art, Theaters and Women"—the part of the paper that functioned as the women's pages, reporting on news and reviews of cultural performances, society events, and clubwomen's activities. The section's organization indicated the broader presumption of women's affinity with cultural and reform matters; the placement here revealed the paper's desire to align its work with clubwomen's. The *Eagle*'s coverage indicated that patriotic clubwomen had not only responded to its call that "every mother" who had the "desire to rear red-blooded and clean-cut Americans" "get into action," but that such women led the charge. Catherine Waterman, head of the City Federation of Women's Clubs' Committee on Moving Pictures, convinced Governor Miller "'the sex interest is being made more and more paramount by producers until it is a menace to the youth.'"[150] The *Eagle* attributed the decisions of both the Governor and the Mayor to join the "FIGHT TO BAR EXHIBITIONS OF INDECENT MOVIES" to clubwomen's efforts.[151]

A clubwoman named Mrs. O'Grady, whose opinions the *Eagle* referred to more than any other person, offered a powerful reminder that the censorship campaign shared front page space with debates over immigration restriction. Mrs. O'Grady's concerns about the influence of films on immigrants youths' sexual morality suggested how intertwined the two concerns had become in the minds of some. After working for twenty years as a probation officer with the city's delinquent youths, O'Grady had

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[149]Stevenson, "How Brooklyn Is Getting Into Action," *BDE* women, 1

[150] Miller, quoted in "The Nation-wide Battle Over Movie Purification," *The Literary Digest* (May 14, 1921): 32; "Miller Joins Fight to Bar Exhibition of Indecent Movies; After Interview With Brooklyn Woman," *BDE*, March 3, 1921, 18. Miller held out his endorsement of the bill until March. On the Mayor, see Fredrick Boyd Stevenson, "Hylan to Take Action on the Movies that are Depicting Crime and Vice," *BDE* women, January 16, 1921, 3.

[151] "Miller Joins Fight to Bar Exhibition of Indecent Movies," *BDE*, 18.

achieved some local notoriety when the police department refused to endorse a 1919 letter she had released to the press accusing producers of deliberately feeding "'immoral and suggestive pictures'" to fans in the "'poorer section of the city.'"[152] In protest, O'Grady quit her job and turned full-time film censorship activist. By 1921, O'Grady had slightly modified the message, charging that movies shown on the immigrant "East Side" were a specific threat to adolescents and "responsible for the horrible increase in juvenile delinquency."[153] The new emphasis on youths was also accompanied by an explicit concern about the link between the movies and delinquency among immigrant girls. Immigrant girls hoping to learn to act "like American girls" imitated behavior in the movies that led them "astray."[154] In short, the movies were an Americanization project gone terribly awry. In a clarion cry that displayed the broader hope that women's suffrage would allow virtuous women the political power to rein in licentious men, O'Grady called on women to use their enfranchisement to solve the problem at hand: "'Women, we've got big work to do. In God's name let's do it…if men in office don't enforce our laws, let's put women in office who will enforce them.'"[155]

A central accusation in the campaign would have been familiar to readers like O'Grady: the NBR's "un-American" moral standards had rendered its protection of

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[152] LPSB #3, "Await Answer to Immoral Films," April 14, 1919, AMPAS. Parsons also reported on the controversy stirred up in "Mrs. O'Grady's Attack Illogical, Says Goldwyn," April 15, 1919.
[153] "Mrs. O'Grady Raps Indecent Movies," *BDE*, March 3, 1921, 9.
[154] "Uncensored Movies Lead Young Astray, Says Mrs. O'Grady," *BDE*, February 8, 1921, 9.
[155] "Mrs. O'Grady Raps Indecent Movies," *BDE*, 9.

womanhood "a farce."[156] To flesh out what constituted unAmerican sexuality, the newspaper described the "lascivious and suggestive situations" in two high profile, "immoral, unmoral, unAmerican" films on which the Board had passed: *The Penalty* and *Passion*.[157] As we have seen, *Passion* centered on the exploits of Polish film star Pola Negri's as the infamous Madame du Barrry.[158] *The Penalty* also featured a heroine—Rose, played by actress Ethel Terry—whose embrace of unsanctified sensuality placed her outside of acceptable middle class sexual codes.[159] Introduced in an intertitle as the police force's "most daring operative," Rose accepts an assignment to go undercover among the "dance hall girls" employed in the leading man's—Blizzard, played by Lon Chaney—"sweatshops." When warned that "a woman who enters [Blizzard's] den risks worth than death," Rose coolly replies on an exhalation of cigarette smoke, "That's all in a day's work." After scoffing at threats to her virtue, Rose proceeds to chain-smoke her way through a dangerous job that involves making love to, and falling in love with, a villain who transforms into a hero only at the very end. The two movies were held up as representative of the "conglomerations of vulgarity and filth" the NBR "continually thrust before the eyes of the public without let or hindrance" and then protected under the

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[156] NBR called a "farce" in Fredrick Boyd Stevenson, "Who Reviewed Photoplay 'The Penalty'?" *BDE*, February 6, 1921, women, 1; "Dirty and Vicious Films," editorial, *BDE*, February 8, 1921, 6.
[157] Stevenson, "Who Reviewed?" *BDE*, women, 1.
[158] Originally released in Germany as *Madame du Barry* (UFA 1919). In the U.S. as *Passion* (First National1920). Viewed at the German Society screening at the Library of Congress, July 14, 2003.
[159] *The Penalty* (Eminent Authors Pictures 1920) Print viewed on Kino. All quotes from the film.

"'Temple of Art.'"[160] Hadn't the Board declared *Passion* "a masterpiece," "a work of true photodramatic art"?[161]

But the paper also displayed how the ideal constituency for resolving the censorship debate—Brooklyn's respectable middle class and presumably the nation's—disagreed over what constituted suitable American sex roles and sexual expression. A meeting of religious leaders allowed that watching slap-stick comedian Fatty Arbuckle get "smacked in the face with a custard pie" was good clean fun, but called "salacious divorce and sex plays" dangerously "un-American."[162] The Council of Men's Clubs elaborated on the "ideas of Americanism" they promoted: "that all American men are money chasers by day and cabaret chasers at night, and that marriage is a temporary arrangement."[163] Yet the NBR's defense of its decision to pass on *Passion* suggested some of the papers' readers might have had other ideas. The "'crowded houses'" in which *Passion* played "'day after day and night after night'" gave "'a fair indication that public opinion is on the side of The National Board,'" its secretary declared.[164] One letter pointed to how one person's sexual satire might strike another simply as smut. While attending a picture with a "large and seemingly refined audience" at "one of our best moving picture theaters," an "aghast" "Brooklyn Woman" reported the crowd "expressed amusement only" at a film she thought "indecent in the extreme."[165] A key device in the reportage also displayed this tension. The series detailed the interrogations of several seemingly proper, middle class female reviewers who had allowed the

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[160] "Clean Movie Fight Gets New Support," *BDE*, March 18, 1921, 11.
[161] Stevenson, "Who Reviewed?" *BDE* women, 1.
[162] "Catholic Society Backs Clayton Bill," *BDE*, March 21, 1921, 5.
[163] "Flatbush Meeting Approves Law for Clean 'Movies,'" *BDE*, March 8, 1921, 9.
[164] Fredrick Boyd Stevenson, *BDE*, January 1, 1921, women, 1.
[165] Stevenson, "How Brooklyn Is Getting Into Action," *BDE*, women, 1.

"sensuous kissing scenes" in *Passion* and *The Penalty* to ravage viewers' senses. When the reviewers denied that the scenes were immoral, the *Eagle*'s reporter asked a question he assumed would expose either their better, or bankrupt, moral natures. "Have you a daughter?" and "Would you care to have your daughter see this picture?" he demanded from several, raising the specter of films' despoilment of Brooklyn's womanhood as the ultimate charge against them.[166] Their replies—"Oh, I've seen worse kissing than that in the movies," and, "If I possessed the same type of mind as you, I would not'"—came from a different worldview, intimating his was the dirty mind.[167]

The one representative daughter who turned up during the controversy offered comments that underscored how differently some young women had come to interpret narratives of virtue and vice by 1921. "Surely" a letter from "G.Y. Janes" declared, her age of twenty "entitles me to class myself under the heading of 'our young people.'"[168] Regarding *The Penalty*, Janes clamed to have "forgotten the lasciviousness upon which so much stress was made. But this is what I do recollect: There was a woman in the play who possessed a fine mind, enough so to be considered one of the most valuable assets of the detective force," Janes began. "I saw the mind of that woman realizing and almost worshipping the powerful mental force of the unfortunate incarnate fiend. I saw a most wonderful and uncommon bond drawing them together—their intense love of music," she continued, asserting the passionate expression of "that love to me was not lascivious." Janes also contradicted the criticisms of *Passion*. To Janes, the "New York critic" who

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[166] "Clean Movie Fight Gets New Support," *BDE*, 11; Stevenson, "Who Reviewed Photoplay," *BDE* women, 1.
[167] "Clean Movie Fight Gets New Support," *BDE*, 11.
[168] Fredrick Boyd Stevenson, "Forty Four State Legislatures Ready to Act on 'Movie' Censorship Bills," *BDE*, February 27, 1921, women, 1. All quotes this paragraph, Ibid.

believed "'nothing has been produced in this country to equal'" *Passion* had got it right, adding "the immoral side—how delicately it was handled." Defending both the films and their heroines, Janes argued their display of unsanctified sensuality was not only acceptable, but that it needed to be judged within the context of the whole film. Janes also underscored how multiple readings were possible depending on the viewer's point-of-view. This recognition seemed to have prompted the letter. How could a newspaper known "first and foremost" for a policy of "broadmindedness" conduct such "one-sided criticisms" "in the present pursuit of the 'censorship question of the movies?'" "For the first time," she declared herself "bitterly disappointed in my home paper."

Yet the views expressed by some of Brooklyn's clubwomen, and the *Eagle*'s own editorial stance, indicated that many believed that films like *Passion* and *The Penalty* were inculcating young women with a morality that threatened young men and the nation. In this variant of the sex panic, the movies were making libertines of young women who endangered the nation's innocent men. A lecture on the need for censorship by Mrs. Maude Canfield— "commissioner of the Brooklyn Girl Scouts" and member of the "New York Federation"—forcefully articulated such a view. Having escorted "more than 42,000 sailors" to the movies for recruiting purposes during the war, Canfield's expertise on the subject of movie morality was hard won.[169] "Most pictures dragged out to unlimited lengths the exploits of some immoral, young woman and would then end up having her marry a virtuous young man," Canfield explained to her audience. "This representation of life is absolutely a false one," Canfield reminded her listeners: "An immoral woman always pays." To teach otherwise gave "a false angle to life" and

[169] Fredrick Boyd Stevenson, "Members of the Motion Picture Board Will Demand Thorough Investigation," BDE, February 20, 1921, women 1.

presented an untruth "so alluringly" that it schooled "the untutored mind that immorality is almost a virtue." A story entitled, "Brooklyn Club Women Disapprove 'Woman Pays Club' Doctrine" suggested many of her listeners shared the view.[170] According to the story, Brooklyn clubwomen opposed the ideas behind the "Woman Pays Club"—the "feminist organization" joined by Louella Parsons and a number of local "artists, musicians, motion picture writers, authors, newspaper women and other professional members of the fair sex who believe in their independence and prove it by earning their living" and kept their "maiden" names regardless of marital status.[171] Congratulating the clubwomen on their stance, the *Eagle*'s editorial declared, "The sooner we women get back to some of the old-fashioned ideas the happier we will be."[172]

"The long struggle for the presidency of the New York City Federation of Women's Clubs" that year displayed mounting tensions over just such issues, indicating the widening rift that would open up among women with the common cause of suffrage settled. The fight in the New York branch of the GFWC also revealed why those most invested in assumptions about women's moral superiority and respectable domesticity would consider film censorship the perfect cause to absorb their energies.[173] The paper called the "victory of Mrs. Richard Chapman of Brooklyn over Miss Mary Wood of Manhattan" a demonstration that proved clubwomen preferred "a 'home woman' over a 'professional woman.'" Miss Wood, a lawyer, "made no secret" that she wanted the

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[170] "Brooklyn Club Women Disapprove 'Woman Pays Club' Doctrine," *BDE*, February 3, 1921, 18.
[171] LPSB #6, "The Woman Pays Party," January 8, 1921, AMPAS. See also, LPSB #4, "Earning Her Rights," May 20, 1920; LPSB #4, "The Woman Pays Club," April 18, 1920.
[172] "Brooklyn Club Women Disapprove 'Woman Pays Club' Doctrine," *BDE*, 18.
[173] "A 'Home Woman' Victory," *BDE*, February 5, 1921, 6. All quotes this paragraph, Ibid.

Federation to engage in "the broadest participation in political and semi-political affairs." Mrs. Chapman campaigned for keeping "the woman's movement where it has been in the past, as a cultural and philanthropic development of Americanism." Contrasting the home woman's "wholesome," "hopeful" ideals to the "aggressiveness of the professional," the paper asserted "in politics woman is still in a sense, and must be for a long time, what Tennyson called 'lesser man.' In culture and philanthropy she has assumed a justified sex primacy." Such editorializing betrayed the more widespread concern that women would use their newfound political rights to take on other "male" roles, rather than to more effectively take charge of their feminine traditional preserves.[174] Equally important, the campaign's outcome suggested that most members of New York's GFWC thought a commitment to American ideals meant stepping outside the home only to protect the values supporting domesticity; their involvement in a film censorship campaign to protect the moral standards of youths amply met the criteria.

By March, picture producers made a move that displayed they felt the combined pressure of these attacks—pressure that *Current Opinion* attributed to troubles originating with Hampton's "sensational article" in *Pictorial Review*.[175] William Brady—president of the National Association of the Motion Picture Industry (NAMPI), the trade association representing the largest producers—offered a plan for reform called the "Thirteen Points" and asked to meet with leaders of the censorship movement, including Ella Boole, President of the W.C.T.U in New York, Catherine Waterman, head of the City Federation of Women's Clubs Committee on Moving Picture—the woman credited

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[174] "Absolute Equality for Women," *BDE*, February 17, 1921, 6; "Good Advice to Women," *BDE*, February 18, 1921, 6; "Out of the Suffrage Camp," *BDE*, February 21, 1921, 6.
[175] "Should Moving Pictures Be Censored?" *Current Opinion*, 652.

with swaying Governor Miller to censorship—and Reverend Wilbur F. Crafts, head of the International Reform Bureau in Washington.[176] The Thirteen Points enumerated thirteen kinds of "salacious, obscene, and degrading" material which producers pledged to exclude.[177] Before the meeting on March 15, 1921, Brady assured *The New York Times* that NAMPI could easily implement the Thirteen Points since its members controlled "about 90 percent of the output of films."[178] Acting as the group's spokesman, Crafts told the *Times* they accepted Brady's promises and agreed to allow producers the chance "to clean their own house." Three days later, Wilbur Crafts told the press he planed to submit a revised bill for federal censorship.[179] The new bill included a set of "Exclusive Standards" that duplicated the Thirteen Points and called for a six censor-commissioners—at least two of whom were to be women. "Dr. Crafts virtually got the motion picture men to plead guilty by holding out a light sentence," the *Times* editorialized, "and now he appeals to the full rigor of the law—with their confession as justification for his severity. The morality of this is no doubt apparent to reformers; among the worldly it excites wonder."

Reverend Crafts, and his close ally Canon William Chase of Christ's Episcopal Church in Brooklyn, were two of moving pictures most longstanding critics. An article in the *Los Angeles Times* on the uproar created by Hampton's article called "the mention of [Crafts's] name" "a red rag to a bull so far as the picture are concerned," noting he had

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[176] *NYT*, March 6, 1921, 7.
[177] Copies of the Thirteen Points included in "Should Moving Pictures Be Censored?" *Current Opinion*, 652. See also, Inglis, 83-4; Feldman, 192-4.
[178] "Producers Agree to Reform Films," *NYT*, March 15, 1921, 11. See also "Should Motion Pictures Be Censored?" *Current Opinion* (May 1921): 652. On Waterman's role in persuading the Governor, see "Miller Joins Fight to Bar Exhibition of Indecent Movies," *BDE*, 18.
[179] "Proposed Federal Censorship," *NYT*, March 18, 1921, 2.

interpreted the article "as a plea on behalf of censorship."[180] "A Methodist preacher, of Puritan stock," Crafts had been a pastor in Massachusetts until founding the International Reform Bureau in 1895 and turning full time reformer.[181] Housed next to the Library of Congress, the Reform Bureau was "a permanent 'Christian lobby,'" Christian meaning only Protestant, which claimed the distinction of being "the first incorporated agency for promoting moral legislation."[182] Crafts believed too many had renounced the Protestant ethics that had made America great.[183] This deterioration stemmed from several sources: for "negroes" it was partly "a legacy from slavery days," partly a religion which gave "undue attention to emotion"; for "foreigners" the "blame" rested upon "a religion that neglects ethics to exalt ritual"; for "Americans, the growth of luxury" had left too many ready "to sell the birthright of purity for the momentary gratification of passion."[184] Drawing on the example set by the theocracy of his Puritan forefathers, Crafts called for the restoration of "the Puritanism of purity" through law.

Patriotic Studies, a book Crafts wrote to record the Reform Bureau's legislative efforts, displayed how intertwined the enforcement of racial, Christian, and sexual purity were to the nation's defense in Crafts's mind.[185] The bills Crafts wrote, publicized, and lobbied Congress to pass prohibited gambling and divorce, enforced the Sunday Sabbath and temperance, and censored "impure literature and art."[186] By 1919, the Reform

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[180] "Sex War Is On In Films," *LAT*, 1.
[181] Wilbur F. Crafts, Ph. D., *National Perils and Hopes* (Cleveland: F. M. Barton, Co., 1910), iii.
[182] Rev. Wilbur F. Crafts, Ph. D., ed., "Patriotic Studies of A Quarter Century of Moral Legislation in Congress," (Washington D. C.: International Reform Bureau, 1911), 2.
[183] Ibid., 15, 23.
[184] Ibid., 24-5.
[185] Ibid., 7-8.
[186] Ibid., 10-1; 24.

Bureau's new magazine, *20th Century Quarterly*, claimed a major share in helping to secure the Eighteenth Amendment's establishment of "'bone dry' prohibition."[187] To justify its work to financial supporters who questioned whether it merely duplicated other, more well-known, temperance organizations, the magazine emphasized the Bureau's "distinctive work," hailing its most noteworthy accomplishment as Crafts's authorship of the Sims Act—"the act that shut prize fight films out of the country." Filmed representations of prizefighting had drawn little attention until the Patents Company released the *Johnson-Jeffries Fight* in 1910.[188] Proving the much touted "athletic superiority" of the "white race" a lie, it displayed black heavy-weight world champion Jack Johnson easy win over challenge presented by the ex-heavy weight champion, the "Great White Hope," Jim Jeffries.[189] Most southern states and several northern cities banned the *Johnson-Jeffries Fight*, arguing it would implant dangerous ideas of racial equality in children and the "childlike race" of "negroes."[190] To ensure the federal government could prevent the distribution of films displaying the victory of "an African biped beast" over "the old Saxon race," Congress passed Crafts's bill in 1912; it defined fight films—and all movies, seemingly—as "commerce" subject to federal regulation under the Constitution's interstate commerce clause.[191]

This success eventually suggested an even grander one to Crafts: a bill to create a Federal Motion Picture Commission modeled along the same lines. Like the Sims Act,

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[187] "Quarter Century of Manifold Reforming," *20th Century Quarterly* 18.3 (1919): 5.
[188] Although he does not mention Crafts, the most complete discussion of the topic of prize fight films can be found in Grieveson, chap 4.
[189] Jeffries, quoted in Ibid., 124. The law was named for Thetus Sims, the Tennessee representative who sponsored it.
[190] Ibid., 126, 128.
[191] Seaborn Rodenberry quoted in Ibid., 130.

the bill that Crafts proposed for the first time in 1914 amidst the controversy over white slave films sought to use the interstate commerce clause to empower a presidential commission charged with licensing every film intended for distribution across state lines.[192] The act would deny licensing to "obscene, indecent, immoral" movies, those that depicted "a bull fight or a prize fight" or scenes which might encourage "children or adults or incite to crime." In testimony before the House Committee on Education, Crafts cited the Sims Act as an important legal precedent. At the same time he used the fact that it was still possible to see "black and white" fight films to justify why a law with a better enforcement mechanism was necessary.[193] Craft was back at it in 1916. And, with Jack Johnson's recent conviction on spurious charges of white slavery, he again raised the threat movies posed to the nation's racial and sexual purity, noting his life as a reformer would have been justified "if only to save the country from being flooded with pictures of a Negro indicted for white slavery and a white man voluntarily standing on the same brutal level"[194] The bill died again that year, but after the passage of Prohibition in 1919, Crafts announced he had placed "federal motion picture censorship" at the top of the Reform Bureau's future goals.[195]

Crafts's main ally in the quest for federal regulation was the prominent New York purity reformer, William Sheafe Chase.[196] An Episcopalian Canon at Brooklyn's Christ

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[192] "Extracts from Hearings before the Committee on Education, House of Representatives 63rd Congress. Second Session, on Bills to Establish a Federal Motion Picture Commission," (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1914), 1.
[193] Ibid., 6-8.
[194] *U.S. House of Representatives, Committee on Education, Motion Pictures Hearings, 1916* (New York: Arno Press, 1978), 8.
[195] "International Reform Bureau Plans, 1919-1922," *20th Century Quarterly*, 6.
[196] Together, Chase and Crafts presented the case for Federal regulation each time the bill was introduced, see "Extracts from Hearings before the Committee on Education, House

Church, the founder of the Interdenominational Committee for the Suppression of Sunday Vaudeville, and the recent President of the New York Civic League, Chase increasingly focused his attack on the particular threat that picture producers posed to the nation's morality.[197] In publicizing producers' ability to enforce the Thirteen Points, NAMPI president William Brady had provided Chase with new fodder to support this charge. After telling *The New York Times* that NAMPI controlled "90 percent of the output of films," Brady testified before a New Jersey Senate Committee investigating the possibility of state regulation, "You can't control this business, but I can. I am the President of the Producers' Association and with two or three other men I control every foot of film shown in the United States. What we say goes."[198] Despite the existence of "companies independent of us," Brady declared that NAMPI could "decide what shall be shown on every screen" because no exhibitor would "go against us. If they were to, we would withdraw our films from them and break them." Chase offered his own spin on this testimony that the industry had consolidated into an oligopoly that could restrain free trade, declaring a "Movie Trust" composed of "degrading, ignorant, greedy degenerates" exerted "tyrannical control and influence" over what American watched on screens.[199]

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of Representatives 63rd Congress. Second Session, on Bills to Establish a Federal Motion Picture Commission," (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1914); *U.S. House of Representatives, Committee on Education, Motion Pictures Hearings, 1916* (New York: Arno Press, 1978).

[197] On Chase's instrumental role in pressuring Mayor McClellan to close all of New York's theaters in 1907, see Janet Staiger, *Bad Women* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1995), 95-6, 98, 102, 107-8.

[198] "90 percent," "Producers Agree to Reform Films," *NYT*, 11. Other quotes, Brady before the New Jersey Legislature on March 21, 1921 quoted in Chase, 57-8, 61. For the accuracy of the quotes, see "Brady Wants Trade to Reform Movies," *NYT*, March 21, 1921, 11.

[199] "The Nation-Wide Battle Over Movie Purification," *The Literary Digest*, 32. The article quotes various newspapers that had covered Chase's arguments. Chase had made

"It is no more unAmerican to have a small group of censors choose what picture the public shall see than it is to have a small group of producers do the choosing," Chase argued in a statement reprinted in newspapers and magazines from Coast to Coast.

A pamphlet that Chase wrote to instruct the faithful on how to answer questions about the need for federal regulation made the anti-Semitism suggested in his public statements explicit. Indeed, the central answer that Chase offered in the "Catechism on Motion Pictures in Inter-State Commerce" was that the "despotic control" that "degrading, ignorant, greedy degenerates"—the "four or five Hebrews, such as Messrs. Lasky, Loew, Fox, Zukor and Laemmle"—had assumed over motion pictures.[200] Rumored to be a member of the Klan, his "Catechism" displayed a kind of anti-Semitism akin to the organization's and to Ford's.[201] Chase even used the Dearborn *Independent* to make his case, quoting it as evidence of the charge that producers "had subtly seized" the industry from "the control of men like Mr. Edison" in order to "'desecrate the American Sabbath to capture an extra day of the week for vampire films and prize fights.'"[202] "No true American," he asserted, could afford to ignore how such men were "now seeking to fool the people of this country" and the "race purpose" that lay behind "the demoralizing effects of motion pictures."[203] Chase even warned "real Hebrews" who wished to

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similar statements before Brady's comments, see "In the Name of Liberty," *Moving Picture World* (December 25, 1920): 979.

[200] Chase, 57. See also, 13, 14, 21, 24, 57-8, 61, 66, 68-71, 76, 121-2.

[201] For an unsubstantiated charge that Chase was a Klan member see, Kevin Brownlow, *Behind the Mask of Innocence* (New York: Knopf, 1990), 56. Chase's defense of the Klan and *The Searchlight*'s praise is noted in "Canon Chase, Episcopalian Defends the Klan," *The Searchlight* quoted in Carr, 70.

[202] Chase, 60.

[203] Ibid., 116, 66. The discussion of the race purpose runs throughout 115-9.

"minimize the anti-Jewish feeling which exists in the United States" to "denounce their evil leaders" and back the passage of federal censorship.

Like so many narratives about the danger presented by the industry in 1921, Chase ultimately charged that the industry's racial degeneration was responsible for the sexual obscenities it purveyed, but—like many of his male cohort—Chase's standards regarding what constituted sexual purity differentiated him from many women reformers in the period.[204] According to Chase, producers used their "tyrannical control and influence" to "compel directors and actors to produce wicked scenes and play indecent parts" that infected them with "the immoral code of ethics they are compelled to teach."[205] Chase emphasized the threat that producers posed to young actresses—even "chaste" ones cast to play "a daughter of Puritan New England"—who "must regularly and as a matter of course part with her virtue."[206] Called a "virtual reincarnation" of Anthony Comstock by one woman reformer, Chase fought against not only the spread of erotic displays by commercial culture, but also the sex education and birth control efforts of activists like Margaret Sanger.[207] While many women reformers supported sex education as an antidote for sex delinquency, Chase objected to sex educators' work as a "glorification of sexual pleasure, particularly women's supposed pleasure in sexual

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[204] Leigh Ann Wheeler, "Rescuing Sex from Prudery and Prurience: American Women's Use of Sex Education as an Antidote to Obscenity," *Journal of Women's History* 12.3 (2000): 173-95. Wheeler's article details the efforts of anti-obscenity reformer Catherine Cooke Gilman, and her fluctuating alliances with Chase and sex educator Mary Ware Dennett, arguing that women reformers' commitment to protect even explicit sex education material helped undermine the law's usefulness for fighting obscenity and distinguished their efforts from male reformers like Chase.
[205] Chase, 67.
[206] Ibid., 22, 107.
[207] Gilman quoted in Wheeler, 175.

intercourse."[208] Chase called the idea of women's "physical enjoyment" of "the sex act" a dangerous untruth—"as my wife says, it is not to be mentioned on the same day with the joy of nursing one's own baby." In short, Chase placed female virtue and interest in the erotic in opposition.

These narratives focused on the problem posed by picture producers found their way into the national news coverage on film censorship—a debate *Current Opinion* declared "one of the liveliest controversies that the country has seen in years."[209] Several magazine articles and digests of the commentary in the newspapers displayed the seepage of claims about the producers' promotion of sexual perversity among impressionable foreigners and young women.[210] There was no reason why "nasty" producers had to make pictures that "flaunted" "sex information" and "foreign ideas" that worshiped "'continental smartness,'" declared an article by a reformer in New York who charged these products intensified the country's "racial indigestion" and led to "many disastrous experiences, especially among women" in Hollywood.[211] A piece in *The Literary Digest* declared the general consensus placed "the responsibility for the 'sex-stuff' on the producers," continuing "it is said, the 'perversity' of the producers" will compel a solution like Prohibition and "in this belief religious leaders, upheld by lay organizations, are planning to introduce censorship bills in forty-four State legislatures meeting this year."[212] By May, *The Literary Digest* indicated a decline in public sentiment, opening a

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[208] Chase quoted in Ibid., 175.
[209] "Should Moving Pictures Be Censored?" *Current Opinion*, 652.
[210] See also, "Overdoing the Sex-Motive in Pictures," *Current Opinion*; "Revamping the Vampire," *The Nation* vol. 113, no. 2927 (August 10, 1921): 140; Gertrude Atherton, "Is There A Moral Decline," *The Forum* (March 1921): APS Online, 312.
[211] "Are American Morals Disintegrating," *Current Opinion*, 610-11.
[212] "Movie Abuses a National Calamity," *The Literary Digest* (March 12, 1921): 32.

piece on the "Nation-Wide Battle Over Movie Purification" with the assertion: "There is no longer any dispute as to whether purification is necessary...the question is over how the reform will come."[213] The montage of individuals' views presented included the GFWC's Mrs. O'Grady, Cannon Chase, and Benjamin Hampton. Despite the continued opposition of most newspapers, the *Digest* made clear that most reformers agreed with Chase that "'as to the promise of the producers that if they are let alone they will purify the films'" "'we can only say they have been let alone and they haven't done it.'" Even the president of the Motion Picture Theatre Owners of America declared "the exaggerated sex appeal as a sin against the common decency of the American people must be laid at the door of the producer," approvingly noting the refusal of New York exhibitors to co-operate with producers in fighting their present troubles.[214]

By the summer of 1921, many in the industry seemed to have awoken to the fact that serious efforts were required to quell the fire that Hampton had helped set. At the national exhibitors' convention in July, Adolph Zukor and Marcus Loew attempted to convince independent exhibitors that their interests lay in preventing regulation that would only lead to Sunday closing and worse. Zukor and Loew proclaimed their plan to fight fire with fire by using the screens under their control "to enter politics" in order to win the battle for public opinion.[215] Like the earlier remarks by NAMPI's president, William Brady, about how five producers controlled "every foot of film shown in the United States," their declarations demonstrated Hampton's point that they were clueless about what the reforming public wanted to hear. In fact, together, the claims of Brady,

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[213] "The Nation-Wide Battle Over Movie Purification," *The Literary Digest*, 32.
[214] Sydney Cohen quoted in *World Digest*, February 19, 1921.
[215] "Twisting the Political Tale Brings a Roar," *Moving Picture World* (September 10, 1921):148-9.

Zukor, and Loew provoked two new attacks upon the producers' power that August: a resolution by the Senate judiciary committee to conduct an investigation into the industry's "'political activities'" as well as a complaint issued by the Federal Trade Commission that Zukor's Famous-Players Lasky Corporation represented "a combination and conspiracy to secure control and monopolization of the motion picture industry."[216] That same month, three censors in New York began deliberating over what the nation's largest market could watch on screens.[217]

[216] On the resolution submitted by Montanan Senator Myers, see August 24, 1921, *Congressional Record* 61:5621-5622. On the FTC investigation, see "Final Sections of Federal Trade Bill," *Wid's Daily*, September 10, 1921, 2; "'Have Violated No Law' Says Executives of Famous Players," *Exhibitors Herald* (September 17, 1921): 33-6.

[217] The law in New York provided for the Governor to appoint three censors at $7500 a year who were charged with viewing every film that sought release in the state so as to determine whether a movie or "part thereof is obscene, indecent, immoral, inhuman, sacrilegious" or "would tend to corrupt morals or incite to crime" before granting it a license. A copy of the law can be found in Lathrop, 41-6.

Chapter 7.
"The 'All Aloney Girl'": Virginia Rappe and the Roscoe "Fatty" Arbuckle "Orgy"

Years before the press fixated upon rambunctious extra-girls as a means to personify the industry's Hollywood home, the *Chicago American* used the figure of another unconventional "working girl" to advertise the windy city's charms. "CHICAGO BEST CITY FOR GIRLS" announced a 1913 headline in the paper—the same year Louella Parsons made her way to that city on her own.[1] A piece of shameless civic boosterism, the article used an interview with Virginia Rappe—"the 'all aloney girl,' as her friends call her"—to celebrate how the city offered its single young women an unparalleled chance for success. A large picture of "The Lonely Girl" sat beside the article, under a caption reading, "Be Original, Girls, and Grow Rich." (fig. 1) "They call Miss Rappe the 'all aloney girl' because she has had her way to make all alone in the world," the article explained. The article suggested that having been thrust onto her own devices at the tender age of sixteen had actually served Rappe well; the experience fostered the "courage and initiative" to go after her fate. Indeed, just two years later, Rappe commanded a salary of "$4,000 a year" working "as a model in commercial lines." Having traveled "all over the United States and a great part of Europe," Rappe could knowingly attest to why the city was the best. "'Chicago affords greater opportunity than any other town in the universe for the working girl,'" she proclaimed. To those "aspiring neophytes" who feared the competition presented by the city's "40,000 working sisters" the paper ordered: "Now give heed…Hearken to the voice of experience" and follow what the "'all aloney girl'" had to say.

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[1] "Chicago Best City For Girls," *Chicago Evening American*, January, 3, 1913, 3. All quotes in the paragraph, Ibid.

Be Original, Girls, and Grow Rich

The whole story of the girl's success lies in her initiative. Girls are in a better position than men to earn a competence, if they only knew it. The opportunities are more, because the field has not been so thoroughly covered.—Logic of "The Loney Girl."

Chicago a City of Opportunity

TROUSERED GI
UNDER CHINA

San Francisco, Cal., Jan. 2.—The
less old styles in clothing for both
women of China have come under
approval of the cabinet of the
which has issued a pronunciament
upon the women to abandon their
for the occidental skirt, and the
give up their comfortable loose clo
the sack business and conventional
clothes of the Caucasian. A copy
edict has been received by Yung Y
sul here for the Chinese republic,
tures of clothing prescribed for bot
The vernacular papers here print t
and illustrations to-day.

The business derby and the fon
hat are the only two mentioned
Nothing is said of headgear for the
who, aside from hair ornaments, ne
worn head coverings. Men are
high calfskin and low tan shoes, w
women are limited to high shoes
their taste. Besides shoes, only t
cles of dress are prescribed for
One, a loose fitting garment on t
of a kimono, is for house wear.
tremely conventional plaited skirt
waist evidently are supposed to
her wardrobe.

At the expressed wish of Preside
Shih-kai, the edict, which was recei
eral days ago, was held until Nev
for publication.

Chinese women of this city have
eral years used American style
changeably with their own trousers
Chinese girls at American colleg
been noted for their correct appea

Figure 1. **"The Lonely Girl"** ***Chicago Evening American***

A working girl's opportunities in Chicago were bound only by the limits of her imagination, according to Rappe's "philosophy" about how to get ahead. "'Every girl can't be a model, but every girl can be original,'" she declared.[2] Originality demanded rejecting the typical low-paying jobs prescribed for women. "'Chicago has too many stenographers and office women,'" Rappe warned. Instead of "'standing in lines for $6 a week jobs that are heart-breaking and demoralizing,'" Rappe advised devising means to take "'part of the money all these business men and salaried workers take home with them and leave with their wives.'" Such a task involved cultivating a flair for "feminine" passions: shopping, interior decorating, socializing, and fashion. One friend had turned "a dilettante devotion to art" into an $8,000 a year career as "'a flat-fixer'" by impressing wealthy women with her designs of "'denim furniture'" and "'Japanese color schemes.'" "'If I were marked by smallpox to-morrow I'd turn 'fixer' for flat wives,'" Rappe assured readers. According to Rappe, so many of her sisters in the "'independent brigade'" had invented professions like personal shoppers or party planners that she had come to believe, "'We girls are in a far better position than the men are if only we could realize it.'" Rappe justified such seemingly wild-eyed optimism by touting the unique qualities she claimed the city and its working girls possessed. Above all else, Chicago appreciated "'boldness.'" Its citizens "'would try anything in thing in the world once.'" Thus the city's working girls were "'the last word in up-to-date femininity'"—"'superior in intelligence, adaptability and personal attractiveness.'"

Despite the attempt to use Rappe's assertions to propagandize Chicago's peculiar virtues, many of the all aloney girl's avowals echoed a developing orthodoxy about the

[2] All quotes in paragraph, Ibid.

opportunities any modern city promised. By 1913, many placed the best chance for class mobility and self-invention along the city's anonymous, teeming streets. Here, proclaimed writers, civic boosters, and the letters of countless immigrants, even the least fortunate might deal themselves a better hand. What was more surprising about "CHICAGO BEST CITY FOR GIRLS" was the unabashed excitement and support it displayed toward the efforts of those whom Rappe called the city's "'utterly independent'" working girls to play this game alone. Scholarship often reminds us of society's darker, more fearful reactions to young women's attempts to win "'independence and happiness.'"[3] Yet this article celebrated a young woman who beat the odds alone, who had already taken an obvious step toward reinventing herself, having changed her name from Virginia Rapp to the more glamorous, French-ified Virginia Rappe.[4]

Sometime not long after Parsons began writing her 1915 series on "How to Become a Movie Actress" in Chicago, the pretty, ambitious, independent, Rappe went West to break into the movies. In 1916, she appeared in her first bit part, as a salesgirl in *The Foolish Virgin*. The next year she won a more substantial role in *Paradise Garden*,

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[3] For a study that addresses such concerns regarding working girls in Chicago in this period, see Joanne Meyerowitz, *Women Adrift* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1988). Other excellent studies of the topic include, Regina Kunzel, *Fallen Women, Problem Girls* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1993), 55. Ruth Alexander, *The 'Girl Problem; Female Delinquency in New York, 1900-1930* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1995); Mary Odem, *Delinquent Daughters* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1995).

[4] Displaying the period's typically careless approach to spelling, the article used Rappe throughout the article, but listed her name as Virginia Rapp under the picture. On the original spelling of her name see, "Tragedy Marked Virginia Here," *Chicago Herald and Examiner*, September 16, 1921, 3. The article interviewed Katherine Fox, a woman reported to have taken in Rappe after her grandmother's death at 12 followed her mother's two year's earlier.

playing Marcia Van Wyck, a temptress who almost succeeds in luring the rich and handsome hero, actor Harold Lockwood, into succumbing to a life of decadent fun.[5] In her first couple years on the Coast Rappe worked mostly as an "extra-girl." Bad luck destroyed the chance for a break provided by *Over the Rhine*. Rappe won a more substantial role in this war film featuring the as yet unknown Rudolph Valentino. Finished just after the Armistice, it was shelved because of the box office decline that met war stories; two years later a badly re-cut version appeared as *An Adventuress*.[6] By this time, the all aloney girl's prospects seemed to be looking up. Shortly after the New Year of 1919, Parsons featured a picture of Rappe, announcing the actress had "recently joined the Henry Lehrman Company to make Sunshine Comedies."[7]

Despite playing a few leading roles, Rappe was not visited by the unpredictable alchemy that makes a star.[8] Her name only became known throughout the world when she died of a ruptured bladder that resulted in peritonitis four days after falling ill at a party hosted by slapstick star Roscoe "Fatty" Arbuckle. The scandal that resulted from her death made Rappe "A STAR AT LAST" and was used to send a powerful warning to the "millions of pretty girls" who turned "their faces to the gilded west" and imagined

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[5] *Paradise Garden* (1917 Metro). Harold Lockwood was a popular romantic lead who played opposite some of the most successful leading ladies of the day before he died in 1918 during the influenza pandemic.

[6] *An Adventuress* (1920 Republic). The film was reissued again as *Isle of Love* in 1922 after Valentino became a star. Though war stories never went completely out of fashion, there was a significant drop in their production by 1920, see Leslie Midkiff DeBauche, *Reel Patriotism* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1997), 166.

[7] LPSB #3, January 2, 1919, AMPAS. It is difficult to say with certainty much about the kinds of roles Rappe played or what other films she might have appeared in; little is known about Sunshine Comedies.

[8] *His Musical Sneeze* (1919 Sunshine Comedies); *A Twilight Baby* (1920 Sunshine Comedies).

going "after the pot of brass at the end of the Cooper-Hewitt rainbow."[9] Within a week of Rappe's death newspapers used the contradictory and constantly changing testimony of various witnesses to create a powerful story in which a debauched star, promising stardom, lured Rappe to a wild orgy that resulted in her death. Editorialists and reformers alike used the scandal to fashion an even more sweeping melodrama, making Hollywood simply the most dramatic symbol of the forces that had drawn the nation's daughters too far from the four protecting walls of the home. The telling of the scandal displayed how reformers, media empires, and popular culture all shared a propensity for fitting the world into a traditional melodramatic form, producing stories in which it was impossible to tell where real life problems and sensational artifice began and ended. Yet by the time the periodical press caught up with newspapers whose daily coverage first shaped the meanings given to the scandal, *The Literary Digest* could already confidently assert a concrete outcome produced by the scandal. "What the demand for censorship has been unable to accomplish" "the revelations of the Arbuckle case" "most thoroughly accomplished," the *Digest* declared.[10] A cartoon illustrating the article succinctly communicated what the "clean up" of "movie morals" entailed. (fig. 2) In the foreground, a matronly "ma" confided, "Oh, pa, Tilly has given up wanting to be a movie star" while her daughter, tucked away in the kitchen, lightened a load of dishes by singing a song safe at home. Here lay the moral of the scandal, "THE GOOD THAT COMES FROM EVIL": no longer would the industry encourage young women to take independent risks in pursuit of their romantic dreams along Hollywood's streets. Instead,

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[9] "A Star At Last," editorial, *Variety*, September 23, 1921, 9.
[10] "Time To Clean Up the Movies," *The Literary Digest* (October 15, 1921): 28-9.

the industry would conform to the larger social paradigm that reasserted young women's independence and virtue must remain incompatible.[11]

Figure 2. **"The Good that comes From Evil"** ***The Literary Digest***

[11] Alice Kessler-Harris, "Independence and Virtue in the Lives of Wage-Earning Women in the United States," in Judith Friedlander, Blanche Wiesen Cook, and Alice Kessler-Harris, eds., *Women in Culture and Politics* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1986), 3-17.

"S.F. BOOZE PARTY KILLS YOUNG ACTRESS" wailed a two-inch headline stretching the length of the *San Francisco Examiner*'s masthead on Saturday, September 10th, 1921.[12] "GIRL STRICKEN AFTER AFFAIR AT S.F. HOTEL; Virginia Rappe Dies After Being Guest at Party Given Here by 'Fatty' Arbuckle; Film Comedian, When Told of Girl's Death, Telephoned S.F. Police He Would Be Here Today." These headlines, descending in size, initiated and framed the media event that set the new imaginary for how young women would be pictured in Hollywood's landscape, for what lessons their presence in the industry offered to the nation and its daughters. By the time the Rappe-Arbuckle scandal slipped from the front pages of newspapers, celebrations of Hollywood's savvy, self-sufficient bohemian extra-girls would be replaced by stories of young women seduced and corrupted by their ambitions, destroyed and blinded by the stars in their eyes. A large, eye-catching composite photograph combining publicity portraits of the event's two central participants sat beside the story, visually linking the "GIRL WHO DIED AND HER HOST." The face of the actress dominated the photograph, as she cocked her head to the side and threw a sly, knowing sideways glance out from under a large hat. Inserted under her shoulder lay a small, oval picture of Arbuckle dressed as a cowboy, looking straight at readers with a devilish grin.

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[12] "S.F. Booze Party Kills Young Actress," *San Francisco Examiner,* September 10, 1921, 1. All quotes this paragraph, Ibid. I looked at the coverage of the scandal in eight daily newspapers. Three were owned by Hearst: the *New York American* (hereafter *NYA*); *The Chicago Herald and Examiner* (hereafter *CHE*); and the *San Francisco Examiner* (hereafter *SFX*). I also looked at coverage in the *St. Louis Post-Dispatch* (hereafter *STL*), *The Brooklyn Daily Eagle* (hereafter *BDE*), the *Los Angeles Times* (hereafter *LAT*), *The New York Times* (hereafter *NYT*), and the San Francisco Chronicle (hereafter *SFC*).

Since the coroner's inquest had yet to begin, the report said little about Rappe's cause of death—beyond the allegation that a "BOOZE PARTY KILLED" her.[13] It also barely mentioned Arbuckle, counting on readers' familiarity with the slapstick comedian whose success at offering movie theaters packed with children good, clean fun was rivaled only by Charlie Chaplin's.[14] It ignored the statement Arbuckle gave reporters the night before when they surrounded him after a screening of his latest film, *Gasoline Gus*, at Sid Grauman's new "million dollar theater" in Los Angeles.[15] The *Los Angeles Times*—published by Harry Chandler, rival of William Randolph Hearst who owned the *Examiner*—printed Arbuckle's account in one of the few other stories to break the news that Saturday.[16]

The *Examiner*'s coverage focused on introducing readers to "Virginia Rappe, beautiful young movie actress of Los Angeles" and describing "the circumstances

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[13] The Coroner's Inquest ran from September 12-14, see "History of the Case," Death Report, Coroner's Office, San Francisco Department of Public Health, Bureau of Records and Statistics (hereafter VRDR). The *SFX* article quoted a welter of doctors whose opinions ranged from "most serious condition" to "an acute attack of alcoholism."

[14] Assessing the popularity of comedic stars is more difficult than other types. While the genre of slapstick encountered little opposition from reformers, most comedians were treated as a separate, slightly vulgarized class. "Comedy stars were somehow separated from other movie actors in the minds of many fans," Richard Koszarski, *An Evening's Entertainment* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1990), 262. Robert Sklar makes the claim that Arbuckle was rated "second only to Chaplin," Robert Sklar, *Movie-Made America* (New York: Vintage, 1975), 107. One poll conducted in 1921 ranked Arbuckle ahead of Chaplin, see *Moving Picture World* (March 19, 1921), 12.

[15] For Al Semnacher's description of reporters descending upon Arbuckle at Gruman's Theater in L.A., see "The People of the State of California vs. Roscoe Arbuckle for murder in The Police Court of the City and County of San Francisco, Department No. 2, Honorable Sylvain J. Lazarus, Judge," 158, Special Collections, San Francisco Public Library. (hereafter "CT")

[16] "Arbuckle and Lawyer Leave for Bay City," *LAT*, September 10, 1921, 1, pt II, p. 1, 8.

surrounding" her "tragic denouement."[17] The paper identified her as "a leading woman" for comedy producer Henry Lehrman and "a woman of financial means because of investments in Texas oil." Although she "had not been engaged professionally of late," Rappe remained a popular figure in Hollywood, according to the *Examiner*: "noted in the film colony" for "the richness of her taste in clothes"; "called by some 'the best dressed woman in the movies'"; "a favorite" at a Santa Monica hot spot that "film folk" frequented where she "took costly prizes" in dance contests. After arriving in San Francisco on Sunday with "Al Senneca, her manager, and a friend, Mrs. B.M. Del Monte," Rappe "was apparently in the best of health" when the trio went up to the suite that Arbuckle shared with actor L. Sherman and director "Fred Fishbeck." Except of Sherman, the paper mangled the names of the other party goers. "A number of other women" filled out the "afternoon party" at the St. Francis, San Francisco's finest hotel. After fulfilling Arbuckle's request for a phonograph—with "the understanding that there was to be no dancing"—nothing was heard of the "gay occasion" until a woman called the front desk, asking that "someone be sent up" because "a woman had become hysterical and was tearing off her clothing." Assistant manager H. J. Boyle responded to the call. Entering the suite, he found "Arbuckle in pajamas and a bath robe" in the suite's reception room along with "several women and two men." Rappe was in an adjoining room "lying on the bed in a partially nude state and unconscious." Since "several bottles were in evidence," Boyle judged Rappe's condition "the result of a drinking party" and

[17] "S.F. Booze Party Kills Young Actress," *SFX*, 1-2. See also "Death Party Told in Court," *CHE*, September 13, 1921, 1; "Fatty Arbuckle to Face Charge of Murder Today; Death of Actress in Hotel Suite Laid to Comedian," *BDE*, September 12, 1921, 1; "Arbuckle Is Jailed On Murder Charge in Woman's Death," *NYT*, September 12, 1921, 1.

helped move her to a different room. "Arbuckle was asked by the management to leave" and returned "at once to Los Angeles"—one of many assertions later disproved.

"**ARBUCKLE CHARGED WITH MURDER OF GIRL; ACTRESS' DYING WORDS CAUSE STAR'S ARREST**" screamed the *Examiner*'s masthead length headline the next day.[18] In a prose style and tone that was alternately morbid, lurid, or grim, the lead dispatched with the hard news covering the scant evidence released the previous day. Rappe had died of "peritonitis, superinduced by an internal injury sustained at a wild party in Arbuckle's suite at the St. Francis hotel." The "charge of murder was laid," declared assistant district attorney Milton U'Ren, because "'the evidence of the various witnesses clearly indicated that [a criminal assault] had been committed and was the superinducing cause of the injury that ended in the girl's death.'"[19] Arubuckle "passed through the ordeal of questioning, arrest, and incarceration without uttering a single word," and now sat in a solitary cell, denied bail.

As the hook in the headline promised, the next three pages of coverage offered readers the chance to eavesdrop on a séance with "the beautiful young motion picture actress" or the "dead girl"—as the paper repeatedly referred to Rappe.[20] Like much of the early reporting, the tale seemed designed to evoke a kind of necrophilia to incite fascination about the "dead beautiful motion picture actress" in readers. A large photomontage of Rappe's face surrounded by tiny shots of the actress dressed as the

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[18] "Arbuckle Is Charged With Murder Of Girl; Actress' Dying Words Cause Star's Arrest," *SFX*, September 11, 1921, 1. See also, "Nurse Relates Last Words of Dying Actress," *NYA*, September 12, 1921, 1. 3.
[19] Arbuckle Is Charged With Murder Of Girl," *SFX*, 1.
[20] "Torn Silk Garments of Dead Girl Found in Los Angles," *SFX*, Sept 12, 1921, 2. For the same montage set in a strip of film under the caption, see "Dead Actress in Character," *NYA*, September 13, 1921, 3.

"characters she played in film comedies" sat in the center of the second page. Rappe communicated through multiple mediums, including an omniscient narrator and voices attributed to "Mrs. Jean Jameson, nurse who cared for Virginia Rappe and heard her moanings and accusations of Roscoe Arbuckle," Alice Blake, identified only by her local address, and "Mrs. Delmont," the woman who had "laid the accusation" of murder at "Arbuckle's door."[21] Over the next few weeks the intimacy of Delmont's relationship to Rappe shrank dramatically—from "bosom friend" to "protectorix" and "chaperon" to an "acquaintance" who met her only that Saturday on the drive up the Coast.[22]

"'I am used to seeing people die. That is my business. I see them die all the time,'" began Nurse Jameson's tale, the testimony forming the narrative's spine.[23] "Nevertheless," the nurse "who saw the beautiful girl pass away with the words on her lips—'Get Roscoe—follow this to the finish'—last night betrayed distinct emotion in telling of the death of her latest 'patient.'" Explaining Delmont was "too exhausted" to speak for herself, the hardened nurse spoke for the woman reported to have watched over the stricken actress until her death and then told the police that Arbuckle had "forcibly taken Virginia Rappe into his room" and "abused her. "Mrs. Delmont said that Virginia was screaming and yelling and that she, Mrs. Delmont, went to the door and found it was locked" so she "kicked on the door several times" until "Arbuckle opened it" to reveal Rappe "pulling at her clothes." A statement by Alice Blake—that she saw Rappe "lying

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[21] "Arbuckle Is Charged With Murder Of Girl," *SFX*, 1-2.
[22] "Bosom," "Woman Makes Formal Charge; Dead Girls Bosom Friend Gives Police More Details," *NYA*, September 13, 1921, 1; "chaperon," "'Wild Night' of in Arbuckle's Rooms Told by Mrs. Delmont, Chaperon of Ill-Fate Virginia Rappe, *NYA*, September 18, 1921, 3; "protectorix," "'Fatty' In Court and Principal Accusers," *CHE*, September 17, 1921, 3.
[23] Ibid.

on the bed" "moaning and crying, 'I am dying! I am dying!'" after Delmont opened the door—filled out the account. Though riddled with contradictions, including a remark that Rappe claimed "she took three drinks, and then knew nothing," the nurse managed to make one point clear: Rappe "said she blamed Arbuckle for her injuries and wanted him punished for it…Just before she died," she "placed her hand on her abdomen, and said: 'He broke me inside—with his weight.'"

The last page of the coverage focused on Rappe's corpse and the spirit that had animated it before her death. A biographical piece, "MISS RAPPE WAS DESIGNER, FILM ACTRESS," sat in the page's center.[24] "Well-known as a motion picture actress, artists' model, and designer of women's clothes," Rappe lived in L.A. with an "aunt who acted as her chaperone." Rappe "first came to prominence" in her hometown of Chicago in 1913 when, as "a traveling art model earning $4,000 a year," the paper ran a feature with her advice that "American girls" "choose original ways of making their living and not slip into the usual, stereotyped" occupations. "Reputed to have independent wealth," her recent work included appearances as a leading woman in two films produced by her fiancé, Henry Lehrman of New York.[25]

The description of this bright past contrasted dramatically with the other stories detailing her brutalized present, stories that preferred to linger on her dead remains rather than determine a cause of death. "MANY BRUISES ARE FOUND BY THE

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[24] "Miss Rappe Was Designer, Film Actress," *SFX*, September 11, 1921, 3. See also, "Dead Actress Rich and Noted For Her Gowns," *NYA*, September 12, 1921, 3; "Miss Virginia Rappe Dies Following a Party in Movie Actor's Rooms," *NYT*, September 11, 1921, 2.

[25] The two films mentioned were *The Punch of the Irish* (First National, 1921) and *A Twilight Baby* (Sunshine Comedies 1920)

CORONER ON GIRL'S BODY" blared the headline across the page's top.[26] A smaller one beneath it declared "NO EVIDENCE OF ASSAULT: DR. W. OPHULS." Dr. Ophuls, the pathologist who performed Rappe's first, unofficial post-mortem, stated that "natural causes" ruptured her bladder and her body showed "absolutely no evidences of a criminal assault." Another story revealed the illegal nature of Ophuls's examination, since the law required the coroner's office to conduct all autopsies of suspicious deaths.[27] Dr. Rumwell—who attended Rappe most of the week at Wakefield Sanitarium before requesting the pathologist's services—claimed he failed to notify the coroner because he "considered the case one of death from purely natural causes."[28] The paper ignored this bewildering claim about a twenty-six year old woman; despite the fact it blatantly contradicted the overall picture the *Examiner* painted of Rappe's last days. According to the paper, in a delirium produced by drugs and excruciating pain, Rappe spoke continuously about her attack at the Wakefield Sanitarium where Rumwell managed her care.[29] In fact, a nurse there quit the case because by "'any opinion it had been handled negligently."[30] Indeed, two weeks later, Doctor Arthur Beardslee, who initially treated Rappe at the St. Francis and then when out of town, testified in Police Court that it was plain by Tuesday—three days before her death—that Rappe suffered from a ruptured bladder.[31] Though District Attorney Brady called the Rumwell's behavior "the most

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[26] "Many Bruises Are Found By The Coroner On Girl's Body," SFX, September, 11, 1921, 3.
[27] "Physician Tells Detail of Physical Examination," *SFX*, September 11, 1921, 3.
[28] Rumwell quoted in "Remains of Miss Rappe At Morgue," *SFX*, September 11, 1921, 3. "Post Mortem By Rumwell Held Illegil (sic.)," *SFX*, September 12, 1921, 3.
[29] "Facing Charge of Perjury, 2 Girls Testify," *SFX*, September 14, 1921, 2.
[30] See "Arbuckle Indicted for Murder," *NYT*, September 14, 1921, 3.
[31] Beardslee, CT, 198-9, 202-3. The doctor found copious bloody urine after catheterizing her.

suspicious part of the whole case," he never called him to testify at any trials.[32] Like Brady, the paper showed no interest in pursuing the strange circumstance surrounding her treatment by medical experts before and after she died, spinning out whole stories instead based on conjecture built mostly around Maude Delmont's words.

The focus on the "beautiful dead girl"—minus the medical facts surrounding her death—and a particular construction of her past allowed Hearst's media empire to fit the first version of events into a predetermined melodramatic mode read more like the text of a play. The fact that Arbuckle and his attorneys "surrounded themselves with a wall of silence" after his arrest only aided the ability of the newspaper to control the story.[33] Papers offered readers a rousing melodrama of sexual danger written along the most traditional lines; a beautiful, refined, upper class, and very defenseless young women unwittingly walked into a drunken orgy that resulted in her death at the hands of an enormous "'beast'" of a man.[34] As in all rousing melodramas of virtue assaulted, of

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[32] Brady quoted in "Remains of Miss Rappe At Morgue," *SFX*, 3.

[33] "Brady Asks Arbuckle Indictment Today; Witnesses Guarded, Intimidation Feared," *SFX*, September 12, 1921, 1. See also, "Arbuckle Is Jailed on Murder Charge in Woman's Death," *NYT*, September 12, 1921, 1; "Film Comedian is Locked Up Without Bail; Will Not Talk," *NYA*, September 12, 1921, 1; "Witness Against Arbuckle Recants; Another Missing," *BDE*, September 13, 1921, 1; "Arbuckle's Death Party Told Court," *CHE*, September 13, 2.

[34] Henry Lehrman, Rappe's supposed fiancé, quoted in Louis Fehr, "Dead Girl's Fiancé Calls Prisoner Beast; 'Can't Face Arbuckle: I'd Kill Him,' He Says," *SFX*, September 12, 1921, 1. This first interview, given by Lehrman to a reporter who worked for Hearst's *NYA* was carried in "Finance of Dead Film Actress Vows Vengeance; 'Must Reckon with Me If He Is Freed,' Says Henry Lehrman," *NYA*, September 12, 1921, 1; "'I'd Kill Him,' Says Fiancé of Virginia," *CHE*, September 12, 1921, "'Arbuckle Beast From the Gutter, I Would Kill Him,' Declares Virginia's Fiancé," *LAT*, September 12, 1921; "Miss Rappe's Fiancé Threatens Vengeance," *NYT*, September 13, 1921, 2; "'Fatty' Arbuckle to Face Charge of Murder Today," *BDE*, September 12, 1921, 1; See also, "Won Honors as Girl," *CHE*, September 13, 1921, 3; "Girl of High Ideals, Says Her Companion," *NYA*, September 13, 1921, 1; "L.A. Realtor Pays Tribute to Virginia Rappe," *SFX*, September

womanhood seduced and betrayed, the motivation for the star's evil doing was less important than conveying the pathos of the victim who embraced the code of death before dishonor. This coverage of the scandal in the Hearst papers composed a kind of virtual play, featuring performances created by a conjuring act that animated the major characters of Rape, Delmont, and Arbuckle—characters conveniently absent or silent. Stories overflowed with dialogue based on hearsay. Such a technique meant the coverage of "ARBUCKLE'S DEATH PARTY" could offer readers an emotion rich, visceral experience of another's misfortune.

The Hearst papers were not alone in reporting the scandal this way. Dailies across the country made and shaped the event into sensational national news. By that Sunday, typically the nation's largest circulation day, the story was featured prominently on front pages across the country.[35] In the coming week, even more typically staid papers like *The New York Times* ran headlines, based on spurious testimony, which shrieked, "ARBUCKLE DRAGGED RAPPE GIRL TO ROOM, WOMAN TESTIFIES."[36] But the coverage in William Randolph Hearst's newspapers outdid all others in length, intensity, and sheer story-telling ability.[37] Located at the epicenter of the

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15, 1921, 2; "Virginia Rappe, Gifted as Dancer, Shrank From Stage," *CHE*, September, 21, 1921, 3; "Rappe's Beauty Too Fine For Film Stardom," *CHE*, September 25, 1921, 3.

[35] "Roscoe Arbuckle Faces An Inquiry on Woman's Death," *NYT*, September 11, 1921, 1; "Arbuckle Jailed for Murder; Bail Is Denied," *LAT*, September 11, 1921, 1; "Arbuckle Faces Probe in Death of Actress," *NYA*, September 11, 1921, 1; "'Fatty' Arbuckle Detained By Police After Actress Dies," *BDE*, September, 11, 1921, 1; "Hold 'Fatty' Arbuckle In Girl's Death; Virginia Rappe, Former Chicago Girl Dies After Gay Party," *CHE*, September 11, 1921, 1; "'Fatty' Arbuckle Detained After Actress' Death," *STL*, September 11, 1921, 1.

[36] "Arbuckle Dragged Rappe Girl to Room, Woman Testifies," *NYT*, September 12, 1921, 1.

[37] In the early twenties Hearst's newspapers were estimated to reach one in four families; his syndication service reached millions more. Hearst newspapers on the West Coast

event, the *Examiner* often broke what passed for the latest developments in the case throughout September—the period in which the scandal daily produced pages of copy in multiple editions published across the country. The *Examiner* set the formula for how to tell the story of the scandal; it offered a blueprint followed not just by other Hearst owned dailies, but initially in news organizations across the country. And, after *The Brooklyn Daily Eagle*, the *St. Louis Post-Dispatch*, and *The New York Times* backed off the story or began to employ a more skeptical tone, Hearst papers in the largest cities continued to tempt readers with sensational headlines promising the latest news.

The coverage highlighted the testimony of participants who displayed an expertise at employing the melodramatic mode. Among them, no one topped the story that Henry Lehrman—Rappe's "fiancé"—told in interviews that catalogued the extent of Arbuckle's "beastly" character and Rappe's virtuous one. Known to members of the film colony by "Pathe" rather than Henry, Lehrman had come to New York from Vienna as a teenager, worked as a street car conductor, and then talked his way into his first job at Biograph in 1909.[38] By posing as an experienced Parisian player, Lehrman piqued D.W.

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particularly dominated their local markets. Hearst's belief that Adolph Zukor was ruining the career of his mistress, Marion Davies, may have played a role in his willingness to launch what appeared like a wholesale assault on the industry; an assault he had threatened only two months earlier to Zukor. See David Nasaw, *The Chief* (New York: Houghton Mifflin, 2000), 313-4, 322-3, 386. When Zukor asked him to temper his coverage, he coolly replied "it is difficult to keep the news out of a newspaper," Hearst to Zukor, September 21, 1921, Zukor Correspondence, file 4, AMPAS.

[38] Arbuckle's long term boss claimed his infatuation with the Pathe brothers' work—"who invented slapstick"—led him to get Lehrman an interview with Griffith when he worked as an actor at Biograph. Sennett says that Griffith gave him the nickname after everyone realized he was a novice in the business who spoke only elementary French, declaring "who Pathe Lehrman really was and where he came from are still mysteries. See Mack Sennett with Cameron Shipp, *King of Comedy* (New York: Doubleday and Company, 1954), 64-7. For Lehrman's use as the opening example of the "dramatic entrances" of fast-talking, "romantic adventurers" in the early business, see Terry

Griffith's ever eager to elevate-the-status-of-pictures-interest; here was a "student of the motion picture art" who had "learned all there was to learn from the Pathes" —French brothers who were two of the successful and innovative pioneers in film.[39] Though his co-workers quickly recognized his act was a fake, Lehrman proved himself an authentic "funny man with an instinct for comedy," according to Mack Sennett. Moving from acting to directing and writing, and, eventually, with Sennett to Los Angeles, he became a principal director and "gag man" at Keystone. After leaving the studio in 1915, his career floundered—unlike those of Arbuckle and Chaplin, two of his former underlings.[40]

"'My prayer is that justice be done. I don't want to go to the coast now; I could not face Arbuckle. I would kill him,'" opened the first interview Lehrman gave from New York to Hearst's *New York American*.[41] The reporter took pains to emphasize his high-browish setting—a study surrounded by "Japanese prints" and books like "H.G. Wells' 'Outline of History.'" Lehrman's account read like dialogue printed on intertitle cards in any number of films directed by Griffith—films he had become expert at mocking as a director and writer of slapstick at Keystone. "'Before she knew she was going to die Virginia kept saying: 'Don't tell Henry. Don't tell Henry,'" he claimed a

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Ramsaye, *A Million and One Nights* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1926), 542-3. See also, Ephraim Katz, *The Film Encyclopedia* (New York: Perigee, 1979), 708-9.

[39] Sennett, 65-7. See also Ramsaye, 543; Katz, 708.

[40] Lehrman directed Chaplin's first film, *Making A Living*, and several with Arbuckle. On his decline, see Katz, 708-9.

[41] See ftnt. 35. Other interviews with Lehrman include, "Lehrman Asks Law's Justice on Arbuckle," *SFX*, September 13, 1921, 3; "'Convict Him,' Brady Urged By Telegram," *SFX*, September 14, 1921, 2; "Lehrman Sends Money to Pay Witness's Bill," *NYA*, September 15, 1921, 2; "Brady Again Commended By Lehrman," *SFX*, September 16, 1921, 2; "Dead Ears Will Hear Love Words, Fiance Is Sure," *CHE*, September 17, 1921, 3; "Virginia Rappe's Beauty Was Too Fine for Film Stardom," *CHE*, September 25, 1921, 3;"8,000 at L.A. View Body of Virginia Rappe," *SFX*, September 19, 1921, 1.

friend of hers told him.[42] "'That means one thing. She had lost the battle she made to defend herself. She didn't want me to know. She knew what I would do.'" Arbuckle was "'a beast'" who "'boasted'" to him in the past that "'he had torn the clothing from an unwilling girl and then outraged her.'" "'That's what comes from taking vulgarians from the gutter and giving them enormous salaries and making idols of them,'" he continued. "'Arbuckle was a bar boy in a San Francisco saloon. Not a bartender, a bar boy; one of those who wash glasses and clean cuspidors.'" Lehrman denounced Arbuckle and his friends as a "'disgrace to the film business. They are the ones who resort to cocaine and the opium needle and who participate in orgies that surpass the orgies of degenerate Rome. They should be swept out of the picture business.'" "'Virginia always had a violent, physical aversion for Arbuckle'' and her accusation—through Nurse Jameson's lips—demonstrated her "remarkable determination" to "rise from the dead to defend her person from indignity.'" "'I can see now in my mind's eye how she must have fought him like a tiger, even if she had had a couple of drinks.'" Not long before the fateful party, she confided to him after reading of an assault case in the news: "'Henry, if anyone tried to do a thing like that to me, he'd have to kill me.' Well, she's dead."

Seizing upon Lehrman's description of Arbuckle's orgiastic proclivities, the characterization of the event how shifted from a "gay" booze party to an orgy presided

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[42] Fehr, "Dead Girl's Fiance Calls Prisoner Beast," *SFX*, 1-2. Lehrman claimed that Rappe's friend Sydia Spreckles—a San Francisco socialite whose divorce from her millionaire husband had been big news the previous year—had reported this to him over the phone. Spreckles managed largely to avoid being drawn into the scandal, stating only that Rappe was "a distant friend" from six years earlier and that her "delirium" had made it impossible to "learn any details of the case," see "Chum of Dead Girl Makes New Charges," *CHE*, September 13, 1921, 3; "Mrs. Spreckles Only Deathbed Caller," *NYA*, September 13, 1921, 3.

over by a host whose physical and moral dimensions were likened to Falstaff.[43] One of Shakespeare's most complicated villains, Falstaff acted as a surrogate for disorder, crime, and license; his corpulent form embodying the force that flowed from smashing custom and convention, from indulging in passionate excess. Falstaff, the dazzling comedic Fool, also drew power from his ability to deflate the platitudes and hypocrisies of his surrounding society, seducing his laughter-drugged listeners down dangerous paths. The "ORGY," in other words, finally exposed the true character of "Yesterday's Jester," the fat jolly man whose appearance once prompted only "childish chirps or wee anticipatory sighs."[44] Arbuckle stood revealed as a man whose unearned and rapid success was a gross mistake produced by a gamble that paid off too well; a man "sated with money," a corpulent figure who bathed "his decadent soul in every fountain of viciousness,' Arbuckle wore "on his shoulder the mantel of lawlessness, on his head the grape leaves of Bacchus." This former "PLUMBER" and "$3-A-Day-Super," this "farmer's boy" from Kansas, rejected the traditional path to success advocated by his parents who wanted him to become "a minister or a doctor." Instead, he pursued a course that appeared to require only a commitment to fun, joining the "travelling circus as a stepping stone to the

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[43] "Falstaff of the Movies and Victim of the 'Party,'" *CHE*, September 14, 1921, 2. The characterization of the event moved from the "gay party" to orgy immediately following Lehrman's interview. In addition to editorials discussed in ftnt. 79, see "Three Striking Poses of Virginia Rappe, Victim in Arbuckle Orgy," *LAT*, September 14, 1921, 1; "'Lead the Quiet Life,' Was the Last Advice of Virginia Rappe to Girls; Victim of Orgy," *NYA*, September 14, 1921, 3; "Zey Prevost Tells of Wild Orgy," *SFX*, September 15, 1921, 2; "Persons Supplying Booze at Orgy Are To Be Prosecuted," *SFX*, September 15, 1921, 3; "Tampering with 'Orgy' Witnesses Suspected by the Police," *SFX*, September 16, 1921, 2; "Lay Death of Virginia to Third Man at Orgy," *CHE*, September 18, 1921, 1, 3; ''Wild Night' in Arbuckle's Rooms Told at Inquest," *NYA*, September 18, 1921, 3; "Third Person With Girl and Actor in 'Orgy', Is Hint," *NYA*, September 19, 1921, 1, 3; "Brady Wires to Stop 'Orgy' Guest," *SFX*, September 21, 1921, 1.

[44] Mollie Merrick, "Yesterday's Jester," SFX, September, 14, 1921, 2.

stage."[45] Thrust into a position of privilege and power, this "beast from the gutter" enticed Rappe to his party and then took "a hold of" her "saying, 'I've waited for you five years and now I've got you'" before dragging her into his hotel bedroom.[46]

As the "Victim of [the] Orgy," Rappe's role shifted too.[47] Haven fallen prey to "the fascinations of the motion picture 'game,'" Rappe was "Lured By Stardom" and "motion picture advancement" into taking a gamble that "hundreds of thousands of girls" who "forever dream" of the screen would make.[48] In short, "Ambition Led Her to Play With Fire," but she ultimately "Refused to Pay [the] Price." [49] Before attending the party, this hopeful confessed to Delmont "'He says he's got a chance to get me something better in the movies and maybe it's a chance to make a star out of me… I don't want to lose the chance, but I'm afraid. I don't like that man.'"[50]

Such reporting displayed a common framing device liberally employed in the the early narratives about the event: this had been a battle between virtuous womanhood and

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[45] "Stepmother Says Money Ruined 'Fatty," *CHE*, September 12, 1921, 5; "Fatty Began Life as a $3-A-Day Super," *NYA*, September 12, 1921, 3; "Arbuckle Once a Plumber," *LAT*, September 12, 1921, 2; "Fatty Arbuckle Had 'Thin' Time in Early Days; Never Good Actor in Stage Roles," *BDE*, September 13, 1921, 2; "'Fatty' Former Show Barker," *LAT*, September 13, 1921, 2; "Story of Farm Boy's Rise to Film Star," *NYA*, September 13, 1921, 2.

[46] "Death Party Told in Court," *CHE*, September 13, 1921, 1. See also, "Girl Witness In Arbuckle Case Accused," *SFX*, September 13, 1921, 2; "Witness Against Arbuckle Recants; Another Missing," *BDE*, September 13, 1921, 1-2; "Woman Makes Formal Charge; Bitter Legal Battle Is On," *NYA*, September 13, 1921, 1, 3; "Arbuckle Dragged Rappe Girl To Room, Woman Testifies," *NYT*, 1-2.

[47] "Victim of Orgy," *NYA*, September 14, 1921, 3.

[48] "Hope For Fame Lured Actress To Her Death," *NYA*, September 14, 1921, 3. See also, "Another Girl Was Attacked at Fatal Arbuckle Party," *BDE*, September 13, 1921, 1; "Falstaff of the Movies and Victim of the 'Party,'" *CHE*, September 14, 2, 1921.

[49] "Life of Virginia; Miss Rappe's Ambition Led Her to Play With Fire," *CHE*, September 26, 1921, 3.

[50] "'Wild Night' of in Arbuckle's Rooms Told by Mrs. Delmont, Chaperon of Ill-Fate Virginia Rappe," *NYA*, 3.

libertine men.[51] The fact that only women party-goers testified for the prosecution aided in presenting the event this way. But this approach was quickly complicated both by the newspapers' desire to read the event as an Orgy and the behavior and testimony of the women witnesses. The prosecution's "star witness," now referred to as "Maude Bambina Delmont," dramatically changed her testimony before the coroner's grand jury on September fourteenth.[52] Gone was the tale in which the star forced Rappe into his bedroom where she cried for help; in its place she now said the two ended up, somehow, in a room, causing her to knock on the door an hour later because it "didn't look 'nice.'"[53] Amidst charges of blackmail and intimidation by the District Attorney Brady, the two "show-girl witnesses" also varied their versions of what had happened.[54] Indeed, the Hearst papers, which played upon the orgy angle unceasingly, turned to using photographs showcasing the "show girls" who "WALKED INTO [ARBUCKLE'S] PARLOUR" and got entangled in his "Web."[55] (fig. 3)

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[51] This was in addition to the reports mentioned above surrounding the testimony of the nurse. One set of headlines in the *NYT* that illustrated this tendency read, "Arbuckle Returns to San Francisco and Denies Anything Improper—Men In Party Back Him Up—WOMEN CONTRADICT THIS," September 11, 1921. "Actor Denies He's Fugitive; Holds 'Fatty' Blameless; Leaves For New York," *CHE*, September 21, 1921, 3.

[52] Robert H. Wilson, "Stories Told Coroner Jury Conflicting," *SFX*, September 14, 1921, 2-4. Notes that "other witnesses were prone to return to what she had told them."

[53] Other accounts of the new testimony included, "Dying Girl Hid Secret, Nurses Say," *CHE*, September 14, 1921, 3; "Arbuckle Indicted for Manslaughter," *NYT*, September 14, 1921; "Proceedings of the Day," *LAT*, September 14, 1921, 2.

[54] Alice Blake and Zey Prevost were continually referred to as "show girl witnesses." On blackmail charges, see "Alice Blake Tells of Visit to Arbuckle," *SFX*, September 12, 1921, 3; "Alice Blake, One of Death Party Quizzed By Prosecutor," *NYA*, September 14, 1921, 1, 3; "Zey Prevost Tells of Wild Orgy," *SFX*, September 15, 1921, 2; "Charge Bribe Offered to Woman Witness in Arbuckle Case," *CHE*, September 15, 1921, 1, 3.

[55] "They Walked Into His Parlour," *SFX*, September 15, 1921, 1. This composite photograph was reproduced in "Entangled in The Web Of His Own Weaving," *NYA*, September 25, 1921, 4.

'FATTY' DID NOT GRAB GIRL, SAYS ACTOR SHERMAN

He Tells Swann Liquor Flowed at Party, and He Thought Miss Rappe Was "Hilarious"

ARBUCKLE CALLED A DOCTOR

"I Did Not Harm Her," Comedian of Films Asserts at Hearing in San Francisco; "Can Prove It"

Continued from First Page.

of murder, including manslaughter. Dismiss the charges against Arbuckle. This would not affect the manslaughter indictment pending out of a week of bewildering details in the "Fatty" Arbuckle case these other developments stand forth prominently

1—Charges of a "frame-up" to impeach the testimony of Miss Zey Prevon, Prevost, State's star witness, and hints of indictments by District Attorney Brady, who made the charges of the "frame-up."

2—Grand Jury inquiry into alleged attempts to conceal that an autopsy had been performed on the body of Virginia Rappe, the screen actress, for whose death Arbuckle was indicted for manslaughter and may be tried on a murder charge. She was buried in Hollywood on Monday.

3—A statement to Sheriff A. E. Dolan of Mono County, by Dr. Arthur Beardslee, who attended Miss Rappe the first night of her illness after the party in Arbuckle's rooms, that Miss Rappe, in his opinion, was a victim of "one drunk high life."

The defense is silent concerning all the testimony as so given in court.

The wife of Mrs. Minta Durfee Arbuckle in her husband's cell, where they had passed a short time "Fatty" in great a "private party" the previous [illegible] there and his friends have had to [illegible] and not be allowed with in [illegible] observed. The public has heard only one side of the case.

Following a Federal Grand Jury [illegible] into the charges of the [illegible] alleged to have been used at Arbuckle's party

A motion addressed by Attorney Lewis Shattuck, one of Mr. Brady's agents, that "Fatty" and his party Miss Rappe into his room and that there was no [illegible] to the room as the door of the adjoining suite. Shattuck made the statement in the court, on his way to New York. Documents [illegible] by Shattuck are on the desk in New York, but he [illegible] Later he was [illegible] to District Attorney Brady, in New York.

"FRAME-UP" CHARGE.

Following on the "frame-up" charge, District Attorney Brady said that [illegible] Attorney Shattuck [illegible] Zey Prevon [illegible] Rappe [illegible] in this case of the State.

Brady was asked to admit he [illegible] the Grand Jury and the [illegible] Shattuck has [illegible] the action of securing stenographic [illegible] to the [illegible] Prevon [illegible] Rappe [illegible] the Prevon [illegible] they told the Grand Jury.

FATTY REHEARSED.

[illegible] of the prosecution [illegible] Arbuckle [illegible] and [illegible] of his [illegible] which a [illegible] on the [illegible] Rappe [illegible] Mrs. Minta Durfee Arbuckle [illegible] Mrs. Arbuckle [illegible] and [illegible]

ENTANGLED IN THE WEB OF HIS OWN WEAVING

"Fatty" Arbuckle, at top, in three stages of his career—first as a boy of seven, then the movie star of the "Million-Dollar Smile," and finally as he appeared in court, accused of the death of Virginia Rappe, who is shown above the picture of "Fatty" behind the bars of his cell, from within radiates the web that has enmeshed in the case other beauties of the stage and silver screen.

Surrounding the portrait of "Fatty" in his cell are shown at top, left to right, Peggy Holly Clark, Virginia Rappe and Zey Prevon. Prevost's sister, Betty Campbell and Joyce Clark, and, at bottom, Alice Blake and Mrs. Maud Delmont. The last named woman was Miss Rappe's "chaperone" at "Fatty's" party and brought the charge of murder against him.

Figure 3. **"Arbuckle's Web"** ***The San Francisco Examiner***

Indeed, the more accounts played up the party as a sensational sexual orgy, the more space opened up to see it as a bawdy, consensual revelry. "Warm with dancing," and the ten drinks she admitted to consuming in two hours, Delmont changed into a pair of Lowell Sherman's pajamas.[56] Until the discovery of the stricken Rappe, almost all described a "royal good time, dancing and kidding and drinking" with Arbuckle "at the center" of the "clowning."[57] Simultaneously, other stories elaborated Rappe's history, presenting a character more "tragic," more "pathetic," and, ultimately, more questionable.[58] Her parentage shifted, describing her as the illegitimate child of a "British nobleman" or "Chicago financier" and an actress; a "queen of the night" who "reaped what she had sown" when she died from tuberculosis, leaving her ten year old daughter "an orphan cast adrift in the world."[59] These accounts portrayed Rappe as a plucky survivor who quickly rebounded from her tragic start—though in a direction that suggested a more complicated past than previously offered. After establishing herself as a successful model, Rappe reportedly set off in 1914 on "pleasure jaunt" to Europe, startling passengers onboard the ship home with a "Nightie-Tango" she performed with a

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[56] "Girl Tells Full Story of Death Party," *CHE*, Sept 15, 1921, 3; "Arbuckle Indicted for Manslaughter," *NYT,* September 14, 1921.
[57] "Dying Girl Hid Secret," *CHE*, September 14, 1921, 3. See also, guests "having too good a time to notice the time," Prevost, CT, 310.
[58] "Tragedy Marked Virginia Here," *CHE*, September 16, 1921, 3; "Life of Virginia Rappe One of Work and Hardship," *CHE*, September 19, 1921, 3. The latter article was the first "installment" in an eight chapter story of Rappe's life run in *CHE*—the city that claimed Rappe as a hometown girl. The other Hearst papers I looked at typically only excerpted bits from these stories and placed them in other pieces.
[59] "Origins of Miss Rappe; Said to Have Been Daughter of British Nobleman in Chicago Romance," *LAT,* September 20, 1921, 1; "New Chapter Show Heritage of Beauty and Love For Frolics," *CHE*, September 20, 1921, 3.

girlfriend.[60] A broken love-affair led Rappe to start afresh. "'I am going to California'" to "'make good' in the movies'" she announced to friends.[61]

Such stories made it difficult to maintain the gendered dichotomies—of passive, pure women ravaged by licentious men—that had initially supported the moral coherency of the tale presented to the public. A chorus of editorial comment quickly declared this recognition the real moral of the story. "What's Gone Wrong With [the] World Today?" asked the headline of an article by Annie Laurie, one of Hearst's most popular syndicated columnists.[62] According to Laurie, the problem with the world stemmed from girls' rejection of "their right to shelter and protection" and "the old ideals" that had supported this entitlement. "The spirit of true womanhood—the homemaking, home loving, home protecting spirit that has pulled the race up out of savagery" had become unfashionably passé. The journalist expounded on the point again the next day, in "Old Rules for Girls Supplanted By New"; a piece one minister called "the ablest article growing out of the whole tragedy."[63] "Ten years ago, any girl who would go to a man's room in a hotel, party or no party, would have thrown away her good name the instant the fact of her visit

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[60] "Virginia's 'Nightie Tango' on Liner Startles Passengers," *CHE*, September 23, 1921, 2. Returning from "a pleasure jaunt" in 1914, the two women reportedly wore nightgowns over evening gowns for their performance. See also, "Miss Rappe Was Designer, Film Actress," *SFX*, September 11, 1921, 3; "Dead Actress Rich and Noted for Her Gowns," *NYA*, September 12, 1921, 3.

[61] "Broken Love Affair Leads Virginia Into Movie Career," *CHE*, September 24, 1921.

[62] Annie Laurie, "What's Gone Wrong With World Today? Old Ideals for Women Is One Way Out," *SFX*, September 13, 1921, 3. Annie Laurie, whose real name was Winifred Black, was one of Hearst's most successful syndicated columnists, notorious for her stunt journalism and affecting emotional style. See Nasaw, 73, 99-10.

[63] Annie Laurie, "Old Rules For Girls Supplanted by New Now: What's a Little Pitch Among Friends?" *SFX*, September 14, 1921, 2. An abbreviated version of this was published as Winifred Black, "Orgy Menace Is Grave, Says Winifred Black," *NYA*, September 15, 1921, 2. See also, "Rappe Death Held as Warning to Girls; God Is Speaking Through Lips of the Dead Actress, says Dr. L. Gordon," *SFX*, September 19, 1921, 3.

was known," Laurie lamented before blaming the war for sounding the final death-knoll on "the old-fashioned rules that protected girls." Yet Laurie cautioned readers not to judge Rappe before they judged themselves. "Your daughter or my daughter would probably have jumped at the chance to meet this man" bent on using "his money and his influence and his 'celebrity' to hush the whole matter up." A front page story in the *New York American* drove home a similar point. "Orgies in City Ready to Stage a New Tragedy" it declared, warning, "the tragedy of Virginia Rappe just happened to be staged in San Francisco," but such a "'party'" could take place in any city.[64] A public statement issued by the coroner's jury on September 14th indicated its members too had absorbed such lessons. After recommending an indictment of manslaughter, its members called upon both federal Prohibition officers and local law enforcement to "take steps to prevent a recurrence of affairs similar to this one…so that San Francisco shall not be made the rendezvous of the debauchee and gangster."[65]

By framing the "orgy" as a quotidian occurrence, not merely an incident involving the exceptional residents of the movie colony, newspapers offered the country a moral lesson on the grandest scale. Such a tack linked a specific anxiety about single, young women attending parties and keeping their good names to a general fear about the degeneration of social standards in cities everywhere. Before judge and jury heard evidence to determine on what grounds to indict Arbuckle, newspapers constructed a melodrama that found society guilty for allowing young women new freedoms that

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[64] "Orgies in City Ready to Stage New Tragedy," *NYA*, September 13, 1921, 1.
[65] Quote from "History of the Case," VRDR. Reported on in "Rid San Francisco of Debauchees, Says Coroner's Verdict" *SFX*, September 15, 1921, 2. "Girl Tells Full Story of Death Party," *CHE*, September 15, 1921, 3; "Class Arbuckle With Debauchee, Gangster, in Coroner's Jury Verdict," *LAT*, September 15, 1921, 1.

threatened not just their virtue and lives, but the nation's morality—and the world's.[66] "At last something has shocked the very, very soul of our nation," wrote one reader in Los Angeles.[67] "The scandal at San Francisco" spurred "the most wonderful nation on the globe" to fight so that "good will overcome evil;" it even spread its "moral effect around the world" by inciting the League of Nation's committee on white slavery to adopt stronger enforcement laws.[68] In this story, Hollywood—as a sensationally well publicized social environment populated by trend-setting stars—served not so much as a scapegoat for society's failures, but as a symbol of the country's guilt for permitting moral changes that allowed the industry to develop as it had. "Film characters," declared another editorial, were "public characters. The Los Angeles colony has been setting the style for the rest of the country…Keeping up with Mary [Pickford] is as strenuous as "Keeping up with Lizzie [the automobile]."[69] So many had encouraged and supported the industry's rise, that it was no wonder that girls like Rappe thought it acceptable to go Hollywood, so to speak, and then succumbed to the seductions of "wine, women, and

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[66] That Police Court trial would not begin until September 22. Tellingly, "innocent" was not included in "Four Possible Verdicts in Trial of Film Actor," *NYA*, September 19, 1921, 3.

[67] Jack Arnold, "Good Will Win," letter to *LAT*, September 27, pt. 2, p. 4. See also, "Will Arbuckle's Plight Clear Moral Atmosphere? Asks Cleric," *SFX*, September 23, 1921, 1.

[68] A discussion of the League's use of the scandal can be found in "League Hears Discussion of Arbuckle Case," *NYA*, September 20, 1921, 1. Other articles testified to the outrage in Europe and particularly Britain—where Arbuckle's films were ultimately banned too. For the claim that Arbuckle's films had already been "universally banned," see "English Crusade Starting on Sex and Doubtful Film," *Variety*, October 21, 1921, 38.

[69] "The Arbuckle Incident," *LAT*, September 13, 1921, part 2, 4. Concern over how women were being influenced by stars was not unfounded: movie stars would supplant political and business leaders as the favorite role models of youth culture during the 1920s see, Fred I Greenstein, "New Light on Changing American Values: A Forgotten Body of Survey Data," *Social Forces* 42.4 (1964): 441-50.

song."[70] The fact that most viewed Arbuckle's films as morally innocuous amplified the idea that the danger the industry posed increasingly lay in the conduct of its stars and the social environment of Hollywood as in what appeared on screens.[71]

The idea that society was responsible for Rappe's attendance at Arbuckle's party did not prevent Hollywood from shouldering the blame for her death. As the scandal's crescendo built Paramount's stock dropped from eighty to forty dollars.[72] *Variety* claimed that in response to the event "Society Leaders"—including Henry Ford—were considering "schemes designed to take the business of purveying amusement to the masses" "away from those at present in control."[73] "It is impossible for the people now in control of pictures to borrow money or even carry on with any certainty" a "downtown banker" reportedly told the New York trade paper. "If this keeps up there won't be any motion picture industry," producer Louis B. Mayer confided to director King Vidor.[74]

By the end of the scandal's first week the *Los Angeles Times* began running what amounted to a counter narrative about the film colony's relationship to the nation's moral problem. In the days after the scandal broke the paper used its home court advantage to

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[70] Madam Q., "These Beauties Reap Same Harvest; 'Wine, Women and Song Killed Virginia,'" *CHE*, September 18, 1921, "Education of Girls Needed, Says Doctor, *NYA*, September 14, 1921, 3.

[71] "Banning the Arbuckle Films," editorial, *BDE*, September 13, 1921, 5. On the problem of censors not being able to pull Arbuckle and Rappe's films though "any legal method," see "Some Officials Issue Orders Against Films," *NYA*, September 13, 1921, 2; "Laughter Greets Arbuckle Films in One Theater Here; No Action By the State Board," *BDE*, September 13, 1921, 1.

[72] *Motion Picture World* (September 24, 1921): 324-4; *NYT*, September 14, 1921, 3.

[73] "Society Leaders' Millions to Back Better Pictures; Arbuckle Scandal's Effect," *Variety*, September 16, 1921, 1. It would be impossible to list all the stories of outrage reported in the press. On the same day that *Variety* made this report the *NYT* ran two that displayed the tenor of the moment, see "Says Films Poison Youth," and "Would Close All Movies," *NYT*, September 14, 1921, 2.

[74] Louis Mayer to King Vidor, quoted in A Scott Berg, *Goldwyn* (New York: Random House, 1989), 106.

run stories that featured "the leading lights of picturedom" exposing how Arbuckle's, and Hollywood's, wicked ways had left the industry "'riding to a fall.'"[75] But this emphasis quickly shifted. Before the first week ended, the paper's lavish coverage turned to articles with a different slant. One type of story involved spotlighting individuals who defended the industry's general moral climate and criticized other papers for "printing every unproven accusation" against the comedian—a tactic blamed for inciting a "mob spirit" against Arbuckle.[76] Simultaneously the paper's editorials seemed to encourage Arbuckle's sacrifice as Hollywood's stray "spotted sheep" to preserve the "white sheep" who predominated.[77] Other reports detailed every step in the comedian's fall.[78] The final set of stories centered on discovering the source of "booze party's" illegal "'hootch'"—an arrow conveniently pointing toward notoriously "wet" San Francisco.[79] Such stories

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[75] "Film People Tell Views," *LAT*, September 13, 1921, 1-2; "Film World Is Rended," *LAT*, September 12, 1921, 1-2; "Booze Parties Reported," *LAT*, September 13, 1921, 3; "Cinema Colony Stirred," *LAT*, September 15, 1921, 1; "May Seize Arbuckle's Booze Here," *LAT*, September 23, 1921, 1.

[76] "Snap Judgement on Arbuckle Deplored," *LAT*, September 14, 1921, 2. See also, "Officials Seeking Notoriety Try to Hang Arbuckle, Says Schenck," *LAT*, September 13, 1921, 2; "Brady Won't Try to Clean Up Film Life," *LAT*, September 14, 1921, 4; "Cinema Colony Stirred," *LAT*, 1-2; "Should Not Blame Motion Pictures," *LAT*, September 23, 1921, 2; "Hart Feels Sorry For Film Comedian," *LAT*, September 23, 1921, 2.

[77] Dore Oliphant Coe, "Inspector of Films," *LAT*, September 26, 1921, pt. II, p. 4. Other editorials and op-ed pieces that attacked Arbuckle and orgiastic idols, see "The Arbuckle Incident," *LAT*, pt. II, p. 4; Alma Whitaker, "Public Idols," *LAT*, September 14, 1921, pt II, p. 4; See also, "Was His Own Worst Enemy," *LAT*, September 15, 1921, 2; "The Mire and the Rose," *LAT*, September 17, 1921, pt. I, p. 4; "My Brother's Keeper," *LAT*, September 21, pt. II, p. 4; Reprinted editorial from the Portland *Oregonian*, October 18, 1921, *LAT*, pt. II, p. 4.

[78] In addition to stories already cited, see "Athletic Club Outs Arbuckle," *LAT*, September 13, 1921, 1; "Estimate Cash For Arbukcle," *LAT*, September 13, 1921, 2; "Comedy and Tragedy," *LAT*, September 13, 1921, 3; "Arbuckle's Furniture Attached," *LAT*, September 13, 1921, 3; "Tailor and Tire Maker Sue Fatty," *LAT*, September 17, 1921, 2.

[79] "Quiz Arbuckle Companion," *LAT*, September 17, 1921, 1; "Here to Trace Arbuckle's Rum," *LAT*, September 16, 1921, 2; "Push Arbuckle Liquor Case," *LAT*, September 17,

allowed the *Times* to place Arbuckle outside the pale of respectability while, overall, presenting a basically wholesome picture of the city and its largest industry.

The *Los Angeles Times*' attempts to bank the fires it had helped to set were complicated by the efforts of the city's Ministerial Union to press the City Council to activate a never used ordinance to create a censorship board.[80] Having petitioned the Council days *before* the scandal hit, the Ministerial Union must have considered the events in San Francisco as heaven sent to further their cause. Seeking to gain publicity by linking its efforts to the scandal, the Union called a meeting on "The Arbuckle Case and Motion Pictures Censorship."[81] A "row" broke out when the Union's president, Reverend Gustav Briegleb, charged that "the industry" as much as Arbuckle was "on

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1921, 2; "Fail to Trace Arbuckle Rum," *LAT*, September 18, 2; "Fishback Hasn't Told All," *LAT*, September 20, 1921, 2; "Death Case Booze Not From Here," *LAT*, September 22, 1921, 2.

[80] On the start of the attempts, see "Censor Ordinance Action Deferred," September 8, 1921, *LAT*, Pt.II, p. 11; "Causes Censor," *Wid's Daily*, September 19, 1921, 1; LA city ordinance #377778, approved December 24, 1917, provided for the employment of one Commissioner of Films to pre-pass on all films. The ordinance was never enforced. The major groups involved in pressing the City Council included Reverend Gustav Briegleb, president of the Ministerial Union, Reverend S.T. Montgomery of the Church Federation and the Anti-Saloon League, William Spalding, president of the Proximo Club, an elite men's club, pastor R.P. Shuler, representing the "over thirteen hundred members" of Trinity Methodist Church, and the Presbytery of Los Angeles located in Pomona, representing "75, 000 adherents." Those most active in opposing the measure included: Los Angeles Theaters Association; Los Angeles Chamber of Commerce; American Legion; Merchants and Manufacturers Association of Los Angeles; Affiliated Pictures Interests, representing all branches of labor involved in making motion pictures. The file also contains a petition of citizens opposed. The efforts are documented in "Motion Picture File 2035 to be known as 2723" and "File 2524," 1921, Los Angeles City Clerk's Office, Records and Management Division, City Archives (hereafter CALA). The September 14th City Council meeting on the issue was reported in "Was His Worst Enemy,' *LAT*, 6.

[81] "Ministers in Censor Clash," *LAT*, September 27, 1921, pt. II, 1, p. 9. On Edumdson, see also "Pastor Opposes Censorship," *LAT*, October 29, 1921, pt. II, p. 11. For protests against the Ministerial Union's attack on Edmundson and the censorship ordinance, see American Legion to City Council, September 26, 1921, File 2723, CALA; American Legion to City Council, September 28, 1921, File 2723, CALA.

trial." "The tendency of the producers is to make immoral pictures" he asserted, before charging that "85 per cent" of the industry was "controlled chiefly by the Jews and that some of the later care only for the money they make and not the moral effect of their business." The meeting ended abruptly, amidst much hymn singing, when Captain Edmundson—pastor of Hollywood Methodist Episcopal Church and chaplain for the state's American Legion—refused to be ruled out of order for protesting Briegleb's "aspersions" against the industry's "Jews and actors and actresses." "'By innuendo and direct statements he attacked the Jews and I, who have many friends among the Jews, do not propose to let such attacks go unchallenged,'" Edmundson told the *Times*. Hollywood's pastor would not "'let only one side of the censorship and motion picture industry be presented, even at a ministerial meeting,'" protesting "'that a jury packed against me should Amen and Hallelujah me down when I had the floor.'" Briegleb defended his remarks. He had simply observed that "'gentleman of Hebrew extraction,'" who "consider[ed] only box office receipts,'" controlled the business.

Knowing its increasing importance to the fiscal health of Los Angeles, the paper also displayed the industry's willingness to throw some punches in its own defense.[82] "The present moment represents a crisis in our business" declared an open letter from the Motion Picture Producers' Association (MPPA) printed in the *Los Angeles Times*.[83] The MPPA called upon "The Daily Press," business associations, and "open minded members of the community" "to come to our aid in crystallizing public opinion" against censorship. Such a measure would "impose a heavy burden" "on possibly the greatest

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[82] "Film Studios May Quit City," *LAT*, September 25, 1921, 6.
[83] Ibid. For the complete letter, see MPPA to City Council, September 23, 1921, file 2723, CALA.

enterprise in California," the MPPA warned. It would also "give color to the belief in other communities that Los Angeles, known to the world as the 'Capital of Filmdom' found it necessary to cast a stigma upon the picture business." Such treatment would leave it no recourse but to find a more suitable home.

And, indeed, a fight opened up that displayed how the scandal exposed and deepened existing divisions within the city, as as newspapers, business associations, and assumedly "open minded" Los Angelenos, rose to defend the industry against other residents' attacks. On one side stood censorship advocates. Men and women who argued that "three-fourths of pictures" were "demoralizing, degrading, and character-destroying" and "the direct cause of the shocking increase in crimes of every kind."[84] Such critics feared that the success of pictures peoples threatened to destroy the leadership of the respectable middle class. Various *Los Angeles Times'* readers declared the adulation showered on Arbuckle displayed "the rewards of an undiluted democracy" and how "motion picture lowbrows" had transformed "liberty into libertinism."[85] Only a censorship board could protect the influence of the city's ministers, "foster and develop Christian citizenship," and protect "a thousand years of Anglo-Saxon development."[86]

Those who opposed censorship in Los Angeles declared the scandal a hypocritical "yowl" produced by "sordid envy" and "jealousy" of the industry that "made Los

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[84] "Three-fourths," "Evil Influence of Bad Motion Picture Resorts," Proximo Club to City Council, n.d., file 2524, CALA; "democracy," Henry Weeks to *LAT*, September 20, 1921, pt. 2., p. 2; "liberty," L.J. Bergere to *LAT*, October 29, 1921, pt. 2, p. 10.
[85] A representative sample of anti-industry letters to *LAT* includes, Evelyn Frances, "The Arbuckle Case" and H.W. Coffin, "Intolerable," September 16, 1921, pt. 2, p. 11; Mary Andrews, "The Industry," September 18, 1921, pt. 3, p 38; Mrs. William Francis, "Says They're Bad"; Alice Scudder, "Favors Censor," October 16, 1921, pt.2, p. 3.
[86] "Christian," Presbytery of Los Angeles to City Council, September 28, 1921, file 2723, CALA; "Anglo-Saxon," Alfred Borden to *LAT*, October 6, 1921, pt. II, p. 6.

Angeles such an interesting city."[87] The newspapers "reek every day with filthy, sordid divorce cases and crimes…in no way connected with picture folk," wrote one *Los Angeles Times* reader, yet "not a word is said about the class or profession of the people who wallow in this mud."[88] The "righteous" who "berate the movies" loved their "evening paper which in a single issue" contained "more filth, more suggestions of indecency, more stories of illicit love, of rape, or murder, of robbery, than you would see in a picture house in a twelve-month."[89] One petition submitted to the Council cleverly lampooned the opposition, demanding the creation of "a body of Censors of Oratory and Pulpits" since they had made "a deliberate attempt" "to enforce their religious beliefs, or their ideas of morals, upon all the other residents."[90] This behavior "was inflaming the public mind and setting one section of the people against another." A lawyer wrote the Council to wonder at the "sanctimonious gentlemen who worship a Jew on Sunday and spend the rest of the week maligning the Jews generally."[91] Both the Chamber of Commerce and the Merchants and Manufactures Association declared police supervision adequate to protect public morals, calling censorship undue harassment of one of the "main sources of our prosperity."[92]

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[87] Lillian Thomas to *LAT* September 18, 1921, pt. II, p. 2. Like many who wrote the paper, the writer took pains to note she was "not in the remotest way connected with the picture world."

[88] Ibid. A representative sample of pro-industry letters to LAT includes, Edmond Fortune, "Defends Actors," September 19, 1921, pt II, p. 2; John Blackwood, "The World is Jealous," October 6, 1921, pt. I, p. 6; Mrs. A. Perkins, "Likes the Movies,", October 16, 1921, pt. III, p. 34; T.W. Sheffield, "Censorship UnAmerican," October 17, 1921, pt. II, p. 2.

[89] J.E.Tilley to *LAT*, October 3, pt. III, p. 2.

[90] Petition, n.d., file 2723, CALA.

[91] Michael Rudolph, Esquire to the City Council, September 28th, 1921, file 2723, CALA.

[92] Merchants and Manufacturers Association of Los Angeles to City Council, September 24, 1921, file 2723, CALA. See also Los Angeles Chamber of Commerce to City

The editorial stance of the *Los Angeles Times* strove to strike a middle ground on the topic. The paper conceded the "Arbuckle Incident" revealed that much more care was necessary to protect "girlish innocence" in Hollywood.[93] Yet it also took a strong line opposing censorship, cautioning the public not to confuse picture folk as a whole with Arbuckle. It also argued that the industry should be allowed to demonstrate its willingness to solve its problems which required giving it time to enforce its 13 Points "honestly, enthusiastically, patriotically."[94]

The one branch of the industry—the independent exhibitors allied in The Motion Picture Theatre Owners Association (M.P.T.O.A.)—that openly discussed how to address the scandal pursued a strategy similar to the one displayed by the *Los Angles Times*. A purposeful hush on the topic, dramatically illustrated by an announcement in *Moving Picture World*, descended upon the other trade papers. (fig. 4) But the editor of the *Exhibitors Herald*, Martin Quigley, criticized the decision to hide "ostrich fashion" in an "attempt to dismiss the incident."[95] The *Herald* dissected the extent of the producers' troubles: the Senate's call to investigate the "industry's 'political activity'"; the Federal Trade Commission's charge against FPL/Paramount; and, finally, how the Arbuckle Case

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Council, n.d., file 2723, CALA. Parts of both letters were published in, "Disaster Seen in Censorship," *LAT*, September 29, pt. II, 2.

[93] "The Arbuckle Incident," *LAT*, pt. II, p. 4.

[94] "Censorship—Cause and Effect," *LAT*, pt. II, p. 4. See also, Dore Oliphant Coe, "Inspector of Films," *LAT*, September 26, 1921, pt. II, p. 4; "For Whom Do They Speak?" *LAT*, October 6, 1921, pt. II, p. 4; "Picture Puzzles," *LAT*, October 24, 1921, pt. II, p. 4.

[95] Martin Quigley, "A Million Dollar Carousal," *Exhibitors Herald* (October 8, 1921): 39. In reporting how the press had descended upon the studios, *Variety* claimed "that nobody who could possibly escape had a word to say. It was felt the less said about the affair the better," see "Scandal Hits Industry," *Variety*, September 16, 1921, 35.

had been "Seized as Ammunition by Reformers."[96] Exhibitors across the country had also demonstrated their willingness to use the scandal strike an independent course that proved their social responsibility to their patrons. Just two days after news of the "death party" exploded, "Grauman's 'Million Dollar Theater'" in Los Angeles yanked Arbuckle's *Gasoline Guss* from the screen.[97] A cascading series of reports displayed other exhibitors' willingness to follow suit.[98] After mid-month, the M.P.T.O.A. ordered members to pull films that featured either Arbuckle or Rappe.[99] The action contradicted the apparent wishes of FPL/Paramount, which distributed Arbuckle's films, and First National, the company that controlled most of the movies in which Rappe had appeared.[100]

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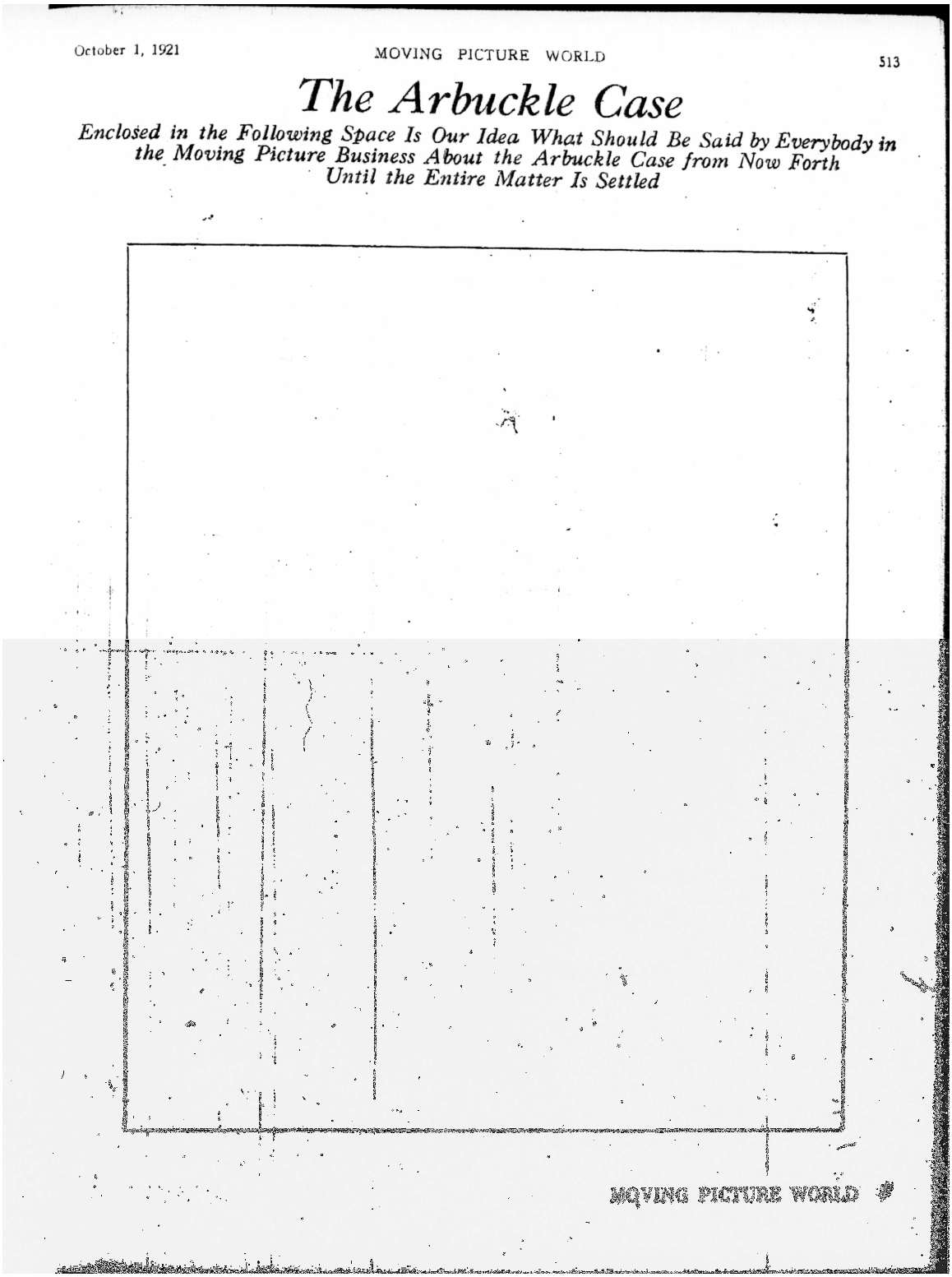
[96] "Arbuckle Case Seized as Ammunition by Reformers," *Exhibitors Herald* (October 1, 1921): 55. The article criticized newspapers for not giving such actions enough attention. "Investigation of Industry's 'Political Activity Planned," *Exhibitors Herald* (September 10, 1921): 39; "'Have Violated No Law' Says Executives of Famous Players," *Exhibitors Herald* (September 17, 1921): 33-6.

[97] "The Arbuckle Situation," *Wid's Daily*, September 13, 1921, 1. See also, "Arbuckle Film Withdrawn," *LAT*, September 12, 1921, 1.

[98] "Arbuckle Films Barred By Every Theatre in Chicago," *CHE*, September 13, 1921, 3; "Cancel Arbuckle Films; Moving Picture Houses All Over the Country Take Action or Are Ordered To," *LAT*, September 13, 1921, 3; "600 Theaters here Exclude Arbuckle," *NYT*, September 14, 1921, 2; "Exhibitors Withdraw Arbuckle Comedies, Awaiting Court Action on Murder Charge," *Moving Picture World* (September 24, 1921): 382.

[99] "Ban Rappe Films," *Wid's Daily*, September 16, 1921, 1-2. The M.P.T.O. A.'s accusation that First National had reissued films in which Rappe seemed to spark the action, see "First National Orders Cancellation of All Films Showing Virgina Rappe As Result of Protest by M.P.T.O.," *Wid's Daily*, September 18, 1921, 1; "Bars Virginia Rappe Films," *LAT*, September 22, 1921, 2.

[100] "Brady Won't Try to Clean Up Film Life," *LAT*, 2. NAMPI's president, William Brady, declared the organization would "never kick a man when he's down" and was alarmed about "arbitrary withdrawals" and "suppression" of his pictures. After starting at Keystone in 1913, producer Joseph Schenck convinced Arbuckle to leave Sennett and form the independent Comique. In 1919 Arbuckle became a contract player at FPL/Paramount with Schenck as his producer. His agent Lou Anger claimed "the new contract is largest one every signed by Mr. Zukor for an individual artist. It covers a period of three years and involves over three million dollars," *Moving Picture World*



October 1, 1921 MOVING PICTURE WORLD 513

The Arbuckle Case

Enclosed in the Following Space Is Our Idea What Should Be Said by Everybody in the Moving Picture Business About the Arbuckle Case from Now Forth Until the Entire Matter Is Settled

MOVING PICTURE WORLD

Figure 4. "The Arbuckle Case" *Moving Picture World*

(March 18, 1919): 10. This was hyperbole, but Zukor invested a lot in an actor he believed could support some of the first features made by a comedian.

Such actions displayed the strategy that Quigley and other exhibitors proposed to survive: direct "retribution" for the scandal onto "the conduct of persons who have become light-headed in their positions of prominence and popularity."[101] In other words, though probably innocent of the "alleged crime," Arbuckle must be sacrificed for playing "loose and wild" with "the responsibilities of prominence," for getting "plain, every-day American citizens to wonder if they should lend their support to actors and actresses who are so degraded."[102] Next the industry must silence the "brass band" about "going into politics" and use subtler means of "propaganda and solicitation" "to insure a more favorable attitude from legislators."[103] And, finally, members must unite in the *Herald*'s "Public Rights League" which offered exhibitors—free of charge!—twelve editorial slides for "daily screening." In direct imitation of wartime strategies to affect public opinion, the Public Rights League would swing "millions of patrons to support the industry," by turning them against "radical reformers" and "enemies of the Film Industry" like "Dr. Wilbur F. Crafts."[104] Fighting Crafts's evangelical fire with the country's most noted evangelist, Quigley starred Billy Sunday in one slide to help convince the public that censorship was "un-American and unfair." (fig. 5)

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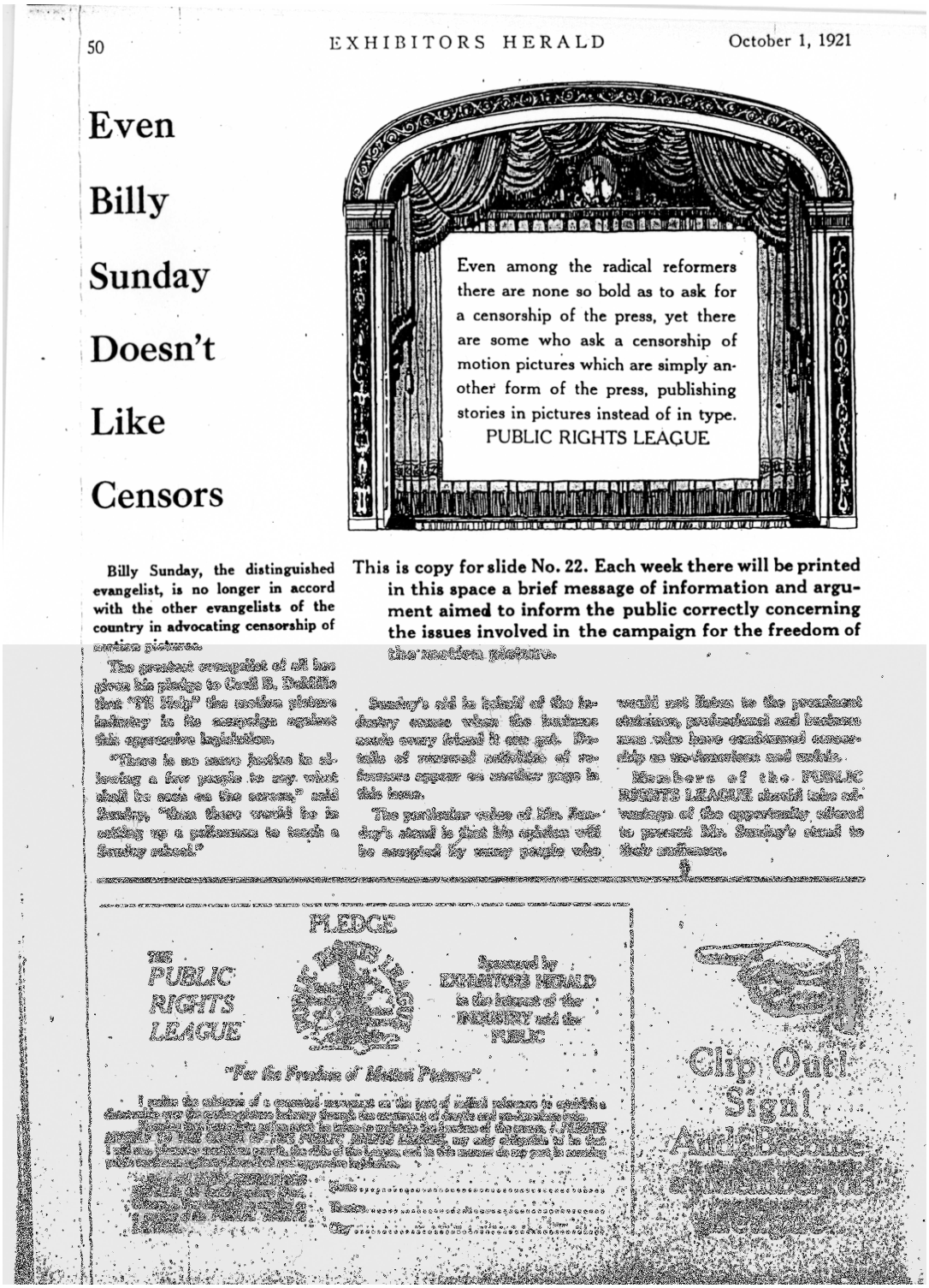
[101] Martin J. Quigley, "Let This Be a Lesson," *Exhibitors Herald* (October 1, 1921): 39.
[102] Through "prominence," Ibid. "Plain," T.H. Smith letter to *Exhibitors Herald* (October 1, 1921): 80.
[103] Martin Quigley, "Keep Out of Politics!" *Exhibitors Herald* (October 22, 1921): 39.
[104] "'Herald' to Supply Slides for the Public Rights League," *Exhibitors Herald* (October 15, 1921): 45-8. This became an ongoing, weekly campaign in the *Herald* throughout 1922.



50 EXHIBITORS HERALD October 1, 1921

Even Billy Sunday Doesn't Like Censors

Even among the radical reformers there are none so bold as to ask for a censorship of the press, yet there are some who ask a censorship of motion pictures which are simply another form of the press, publishing stories in pictures instead of in type.
PUBLIC RIGHTS LEAGUE

Billy Sunday, the distinguished evangelist, is no longer in accord with the other evangelists of the country in advocating censorship of motion pictures.

The greatest evangelist of all has given his pledge to Cecil B. DeMille that "I'll Help" the motion picture industry in its campaign against this oppressive legislation.

"There is no more justice in allowing a few people to say what shall be seen on the screen," said Sunday, "than there would be in setting up a policeman to teach a Sunday school."

This is copy for slide No. 22. Each week there will be printed in this space a brief message of information and argument aimed to inform the public correctly concerning the issues involved in the campaign for the freedom of the motion picture.

Sunday's aid in behalf of the industry comes when the business needs every friend it can get. Details of renewed activities of reformers appear on another page in this issue.

The particular value of Mr. Sunday's stand is that his opinion will be accepted by many people who would not listen to the prominent clergymen, professional and business men who have condemned censorship as un-American and unfair.

Members of the PUBLIC RIGHTS LEAGUE should take advantage of the opportunity offered to present Mr. Sunday's stand to their audiences.

PLEDGE

THE PUBLIC RIGHTS LEAGUE

Sponsored by EXHIBITORS HERALD in the interest of the INDUSTRY and the PUBLIC

"For the Freedom of Motion Pictures"

Clip Out! Sign! And Become a Member of

Figure 5. "Billy Sunday and the Censors" *Exhibitors Herald*

But the Hearst papers offered readers more compelling enemies than radical reformers like Crafts that fall. The mutually reinforcing stories about Arbuckle's Orgy and the expose on the Klan focused on dangers to the social order of near apocalyptic proportions. The papers virtuosity at slotting events into a melodramatic crusade was particularly apparent in the slow-scandal-related news week between the coroner jury's verdict and the opening of the arraignment trial. Papers tailored some reporting to local audiences, offering Chicago more stories about Rappe, San Francisco more on efforts to uncover a **"SF-HOLLYWOOD 'BOOZE RAILROAD.'"**[105] Yet predominantly similar narratives made news and multiple daily editions across the country by focusing upon the scandal-as-orgy, the spectacle of Rappe's burial in Hollywood Cemetery, and the concurrent campaign to expose the "**SECRETS OF THE KKK**."[106] For weeks, the investigation of the "Menace" posed by the "Anti-Jewish, Anti-Catholic and Alien Organization" shared the front page with the scandal in Hearst owned papers. Acting as free advertising for the secret empire, it ultimately helped to send its membership sky-rocketing.[107] "'Hang Fatty Arbuckle or the KKK will hang him and you'" the Klan

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[105] "S.F.-Hollywood 'Booze Railroad' Traced," *SFX*, September 18,1921, 1.

[106] For a sample of funereal stories, see "Remains of Virginia Go Tonight," *CHE*, September 16, 1921, 2; "Miss Rappe's Body Departs," *SFX*, September 17, 1921, 2; "8,000 At L.A. View Body of Virginia Rappe," *SFX*, September 19, 1921, 3; "Funeral of Actress Held in Hollywood," *NYA*, September 2o, 1921, 3; "Secrets of the Ku Klux Klan Are Exposed; Menace of Anti-Jewish, Anti-Catholic and Alien Organization Revealed," *SFX*, September 18, 1921, 1-2. The headlines of the two investigations were entwined throughout much of the scandal's coverage in the Hearst papers. See for instance, "Girl Tells Full Story of Death Party," "Grand Goblin Risks Death to Expose Ku Klux Secrets," *CHE*, September 15, 1921, 1.

[107] Nancy MacLean, *Behind the Mask of Chivalry* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1994), 5; Kenneth T. Jackson, *The Ku Klux Klan and the City* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1967), 11-2.

advised San Francisco's district attorney.[108] "COWBOYS MOB ARBUCKLE FILM" another headline blared that day, detailing a celluloid lynching performed by "150 men and boys" reported to have shot up a screen in Wyoming and then burned the comedian's film in the street.[109]

Such coverage offered a virtual incarnation of a mob's frenzied spirit, seemingly designed to provoke readers into feeling the real thing. Though the newspapers sought to rouse readers to attack the Klan, its overall coverage suggested support for those willing to take forceful measures to protect the nation. Certainly its tone and style makes it easy to understand Arbuckle's "Fear of the Big Throng" anticipated at the trial's opening.[110] And, indeed, photographs that day displayed police restraining a crowd of several hundred women and men pressing for admittance; the crowd prompted Judge Sylvain Lazarus to rule that men without official business could not attend.[111] The ruling rested on more than concern over possible vigilante actions by men. Lazarus sat in Women's Court, a special division within the criminal justice system designed to treat crimes by and against women as moral offenses demanding special considerations and protections.[112] Many also viewed Women's Court as a means to improve women's comfort with the judicial system and their recently acquired right to sit on juries.[113]

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[108] "Police Judge Will Exclude Men at Trial," *SFX*, September 21, 1921, 2.
[109] "Cowboys Mob Arbuckle Film," *SFX*, September 18, 1921; "Cowboys Shoot Up Arbuckle Film Then Burn It," *NYA*, September 18, 1921, 2. The event turned out to be a case of fake celluloid vigilantism staged by a savvy exhibitor, see "Arbuckle Film Not Burned," *NYT*, September 22, 1921.
[110] "Arbuckle in Fear of Big Throng," *SFX*, September 17, 1921, 1.
[111] "Police Judge Will Exclude Men at Trial," *SFX*, September 21, 1921, 2; ""Preliminary in Arbuckle Case Begins Today," *SFC*, September 22, 1921, 1;
[112] On the origins of Women's Court in California, see Beverly Blair Cook, "Moral Authority and Gender Difference: Georgia Bullock and the Los Angeles Women's Court," 77 *Judicature* 144 (November-December, 1993): 30-45. Cook argues their

California clubwomen had been instrumental in pressing for Women's Courts. Their sense of proprietorship helps to explain the behavior of a group whose attendance at Arbuckle's arraignment trial received more press attention than any other audience: the Woman's Vigilant Committee (WVC).[114] Composed of representatives from fifty-two local women's organizations, the WVC was an affiliate of the General Federation of Women's Clubs (GFWC).[115] Like that organization, it drew socially prominent, largely middle and upper class women.[116] Unlike the parent organization, WVC's members were of all religious faiths.[117] Its president—Dr. Mariana Bertola—was both a past president of the California Federation of Women's Clubs (CFWC) and a practicing medical surgeon who taught at Mills College.[118] The daughter of immigrants, Bertola's parents had come to the Bay Area from Italy in 1852, made money in mining, and eventually

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purpose was to remove women defendants from men's observations and intimidation, to treat moral's complaints as women's problems, and to give women the authority to protect and discipline other women.

[113] For a discussion of women's relationship to jury service in the twentieth century see, Linda Kerber, *No Constitutional Right to be Ladies* (New York: Hill and Wang, 1999), chapter 4.

[114] See for instance, "Women's Court Is Endangered By Amendment," *SFC*, August 20, 1920, 2.

[115] "Vigilant Leagues Not Formed in Spirit of Vengeance or Retribution," *The Clubwoman* 19.3 (December 1921): 30. The article reprints a speech by President Dr. Mariana Bertola. Bertola notes the group had been "misnamed" by the public because it original name was the Vigilant Committee and seven of the fifty-nine clubs it drew members from contained men. I use the "WVC" because every mention in the press called them this, including the entry for the "Woman's Vigilant Committee" in Louis Lyons, ed., *Who's Who Among the Women of California* (San Francisco: Security Publishing Co., 1922), 197.

[116] Annie Laurie, "Vice Ring Tries to Stop Citizens," SFX, December 12, 1920, 3. .

[117] "Women Meet to Pledge Aid in Purging City," *SFX*, December 14, 1920, 2. The article lists clubs represented, including Jewish and Catholic women's clubs

[118] Elinor Richey, *Eminent Women of the West* (Berkeley: Howell-North Books, 1975), 11-2. See also, Papers of Dr. Aurelia Reinhardt, Olin Library, Mills College, Oakland, California.

created the region's first extensive vineyard.[119] After earning her medical degree at Stanford, Bertola became a pioneer in the new fields of obstetrics and pediatrics. By 1913, her success as a surgeon and philanthropist was so notable that she became the only woman entitled to a place in *San Francisco, Its Builders Past and Present*—a two volume set with one-hundred and thirty two entries. With Bertola often assuming the role of spokeswoman, the WVC played a vital role in the next act of the drama newspapers offered readers. Lavishing attention on the group, the *San Francisco Examiner* emphasized their early successes in shaping the terms on that judged Arbuckle. Other papers followed this lead, initially latching onto the WVC as a kind of moral center in the scandal's storm.[120]

Demanding justice for Virginia Rappe, Bertola appointed a committee to monitor the proceedings to ensure that political corruption, the influence of Arbuckle's wealth, and female witnesses' timidity would not influence the outcome of the trial.[121] In the immediate run, they aimed to ensure that sexual assault laws were not just a legal "'theory, but a fact.'"[122] In fact, the WVC sought much more than this, linking the enforcement of these laws to the preservation of a set of broader moral "'ideals'"

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[119] *San Francisco, Its Builders Past and Present vol.2* (San Francisco: S.J. Clarke Publishing Co., 1913), 269-70.

[120] Citing every mention of the group would be an extremely difficult and space consuming task.
See for instance, "Bay City Women Stirred," *LAT*, September 15, 1921, 6; "Arbuckle to be Tried on Murder Charge in Death of Film Actress," *STL*, September 16, 1921, 1; "Bail Denied," *CHE*, September 17, 1921, 2; "Brady Determined to Push Case Against Arbuckle," *LAT*, September 16, 1921, 1; "Arbuckle Arraigned for Murder," *NYA*, September 17, 1921, 3; "Women Want Only Justice," *LAT*, September 17, 1921, 1-2; "Physician Went On Trip After Hearing Dying Actress' Story," *NYA*, September 18, 1921, 1; "Testify to Bruises On Virginia Rappe," *NYT*, September 23, 1921, 5.

[121] "Women Want Only Justice," *LAT*, September 17, 1921, 1.

[122] Bertola quoted in "Women Vigilants Plan to Watch Law Enforcement," *SFX*, September 21, 1921, 2.

regarding female virtue and respectability that they believed under assault The case illustrated the necessity of protecting "'the sanctity of the home'" and "'the women within them'" Bertola told the press, admonishing members later that week, "'Remember, it was in one of the most respectable places in San Francisco that this outrage took place.'"[123] Criticisms offered by the WVC committee members about the women attending the trial also illustrated their conviction that the right sort of ladies needed to restrain their poorer, younger, and generally weaker willed sisters from degrading themselves. When hundreds of curious female "sensation seekers" of all ages and social classes jammed the courthouse to get a look at the show, a member called upon the judge to limit attendance to "mature," "respectable" women.[124] In a critique at odds with the medium in which it was conveyed, the WVC accused them of treating the court proceedings like a thrilling play. The behavior undermined their central message: in order to prevent "'a repetition of the awful Arbuckle case'" young women must be reminded "'of dangers confronting them'" so they might "'return to the cultural things of life" and "the so-called 'old-fashioned' ideals."[125]

One article written by Bertola pointed to the more complicated local history that explained both the organization's formation and prominence. "'The Arbuckle party was

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[123] Bertola quoted in "Vigilant Women Condemn Wild Orgy of Arbuckle," *SFX*, September 15, 1921, 2; "Women Vigiliants Plan to Watch Law Enforcement," *SFX*, 2

[124] "Women Jam Courtroom to See Comedian," *SFX*, September 23, 1921, 2. "Crowds Pack Courtroom and Halls to Hear Arbuckle Testimony," *SFC*, September 23, 1921, 5. Reportedly every one of the "155 seats" in the courtroom was filled and "women lined the aisles, stood on window sills, and even crowded for seats in the prisoners' dock…Outside approximately 500 lined the halls." Mrs. Harold Lawrence Seager, "Club Leader Raps Talkers and Curious," *SFX*, September 23, 1921, 3.

[125] Myrtle McQuarrie, "More Mature Women, Fewer Girls at Trial," *SFX*, September 21, 1921, 2.

nothing better than a fashionable gangster case,'" she declared.[126] Just because the star staged his "'outrage'" in one of the city's "'most respectable'" and "'luxurious'" hotels there was no reason to think the comedian better than the "'Howard Street gangsters.'" Bertola's allusion referred to a series of events that had rocked San Francisco over the past year. Early on Thanksgiving morning 1920, a young woman named Jean Stanley called the police to report she had escaped from a group of men who were holding a friend captive on Howard Street. When the police raided the "cottage" they found Jessie Montgomery alone, badly beaten, and "lying nude upon to floor."[127] Before their hospitalization, the two women told "of having been subjected to brutal attacks by eight men." The two had met their assailants the night before at a public dance hall, telling police they had accepted a ride home from the men who lured them into a small building on Howard Street under the pretext of getting ice cream. Seventeen year old Montgomery and twenty-one year old Stanley were roommates who worked as telephone operators after moving to San Francisco in search of work months earlier. Emboldened by the sympathetic stories in the press, other "Victims of Orgies" quickly stepped forward to "Relate Outrages" that suggested a systemic willingness to dismiss such crimes.[128] A week later, in Santa Rosa, three police officers were shot and killed during

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[126] "'Like Howard St. Gang Case,' Says Leader," *SFX*, September 14, 1921, 3.
[127] "Girl Victims Spent Night of Torture," *SFX*, December 6, 1920, 2. See also, "Lawyer Fails to Shake Girl in Grilling; Jesse Montgomery Withstands Cross-Examination and Attack Upon Her Past Character," *SFX*, December 18, 1920, *SFX*, 2.
[128] "20 More Gangsters Sought For Howard Street Horrors," *SFX*, December 5, 1920, 10; Annie Laurie, "Where is Justice in California? 100 Girls Ravaged in Six Months," December 6, 1920, *SFX*, 3; "Park Assault Laid to Trio By Girl of 17," *SFX*, December 9, 1920, 1-2; "Girl, 20, Sobs Recital of Attack by 19," *SFX*, December 11, 1920, 1-2; "Spud Sullen As New Victim Accuses Him," *SFX*, December 12, 1920, 1.

the attempted arrest of three of Howard "gangsters" involved in the attacks.[129] Later that day, guards barely repulsed a crowd of "2,000 men and women" armed with guns and telephone poles who attempted to storm the Santa Rosa jailhouse, chanting "lynch them, lynch them." Four days later "100 masked men" overpowered the sheriff and his deputies in the night, hanging the suspects from a near-by tree.[130] The governor called the event "deplorable," promising authorities would deal "adequately with the lynching band." No arrests were ever made and the story immediately disappeared from sight.[131]

Instead, the *Examiner*'s coverage turned to publicizing—and, in crucial respects, rousing—an attack on the political corruption and social customs that believed responsible for the events.[132] "Progressive San Francisco" must finally "sweep away traditional barriers of complacency" that allowed its rollicking, Wild West past to color its present.[133] Such complacency, many feared, explained the city's reversal of fortunes, accounting for why Los Angeles had recently surpassed it as the West Coast's largest city. Equally critical, the focus on these efforts created an image that replaced the brutal display of Wild West law and order with a kind of modern, moral vigilantism that cast reform-minded residents as defenders of the public good.

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[129] "Vice Gangsters Slay Three Officers; Lynchers Storm Santa Rosa Jail," *SFX*, December 6, 1920, 1-2.
[130] "3 Gangsters Lynched By Santa Rosa Mob," *SFX*, December 10, 1920, 1-2.
[131] "Lynching of Gang Flayed by Governor," *SFX*, December 11, 1920, 2. "Sonoma Jury Says Sheriff Did Full Duty," SFC, December 11, 1920, 3.
[132] "New Outrage Bared; Police Shake-Up On," *SFX*, December 11, 1920, 1. It seems meaningful that this was the headline the day after the lynching. See Hearst's editorial, "Free San Francisco of Criminal Elements, Is Plea of Mr. Hearst," *SFX*, December 19, 1920, 1. On Hearst's penchant for leading crusades in which the "public was the innocent victim" and his recognition that what counted as news were events that might be plotted as a rousing melodramatic tale, see Nasaw, 76-103.
[133] "Progressive San Francisco Sweeps Away Traditional Barriers of Complacency Amidst Scenes of Wildest Enthusiasm," *SFX*, February 16, 1921, 1.

With impeccable timing, representatives from dozens of local women's clubs chose this moment to create their Vigilant Committee.[134] "Like the Vigilant Committee of early days," an account that memorialized the group intoned, "these women were assembled with haste" "determined to protect young girls of the community," and "led by the valiant leader, Dr. Mariana Bertola."[135] In the midst of reports that foretold of defense lawyers' plans to put the reputations of the "Gangster victims" on trial, the WVC announced that members would attend all trials involving sexual assault to ensure the law focused on the present criminal actions of men and not the victim's past.[136] Writing in support of their efforts, Hearst columnist Annie Laurie declared, "I do not believe yet that this girl was a bad girl, but even if she was, that is no excuse for refusing her or any kind of a woman protection against such revolting cruelty."[137] With Laurie championing their point of view, members of the WVC articulated what would become the standard feminist analysis of rape: the sexual reputation of the victim did not matter; the question was simply whether she had said yes or no.[138] Such efforts displayed the WVC's determination to use women's new political rights to put muscle behind their moral authority, making men pay more than lip service to disciplining men who violated

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[134] "Civic League Launches Vice Investigation," *SFX*, December 10, 1920, 2;"Women Form Association to Purge S.F.," *SFX*, December 11, 1920, 3; Annie Laurie, "Vice Ring Tries Threats to Stop Citizens, But Clean-Up Work Will Not Halt," *SFX*, December 12, 1920, 3; "S.F. Citizens Determined to Check Vice," *SFX*, December 13, 1920, 2.
[135] Lyons, 197.
[136] "Boxer Will Attack Girl's Reputation," *SFX*, December 16, 1920, 1-2; "Murphy Will Plead Alibi In Face of Charges By Girls," *SFX*, December 17, 1921, 1-2; "Annie Laurie, "The Underworld's Taking Heart Again, Maybe They Forget Women Can Vote Now," *SFX*, December 18, 1920, 3;Vigilant Committee Plans Cleanup of Law Enforcement," *SFX*, January 4, 1921, 7.
[137] Annie Laurie, "The Underworld's Taking Heart Again," *SFX*, 3.
[138] Annie Laurie, Keep the Fires Burning—That's Women's Objective," *SFX*, December 24, 1920, 2.

society's moral code. In a 1913 nationally reported election, newly enfranchised women in San Francisco used their ballots to do just that, recalling a judge who dismissed cases of assault and rape.[139] Now, in addition to monitoring trials involving sexual assault, members helped to organize a drive to recall two more judges and to investigate the possibility that graft played a role in the dismissive attitude of both judges and the police.[140] "There is a new story teller—the woman voter—and she knows just exactly what she wants," Laurie exulted in a column that characteristically seemed to summon events into being as much as to reflect them.[141]

The WVC's efforts and Laurie's rhetoric also displayed how cleansing the city's moral atmosphere demanded curtailing young women's independence. In the name of restoring the preeminent influence of the home upon young women, the WVC took charge of a campaign to shutter all of the city's public dance halls.[142] Bertola succinctly described the rationale behind such efforts: places of commercial entertainment threatened to turn young women into "the perverted sex type."[143] Now the owners of

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[139] Gale Gullett, "City Mothers, City Daughters, and the Dance Hall Girls," in *Women and the Structure of Society* (Durham: Duke University Press, 1984), 150-54.
[140] For the campaign's start, see "Report Urges Judge's Recall, City Cleanup," *SFX*, December 14, 1920, 2. On the report that detailed the dismissals, see "Report Asks that Roche Quit Office," *SFX*, December 14, 1921, 1.
[141] Annie Laurie, "The Underworld's Taking Heart Again," *SFX*, 3.
[142] Annie Laurie, "Women of City Aroused; Mass Meeting Is Electric with Feeling," *SFX*, December 14, 1920, 3; "Club Thrown open to S.F. Working Girls," *SFX*, December 15, 1920, 2; "Abolish Vice, S.F. Women's Clubs Demand," *SFX*, December 15, 1920, 2; Annie Laurie, "Indeterminate Sentences—What of Them?" *SFX*, December 15, 1920, 2. "Charges against City Dances Aired," *SFX*, December 18, 1920, 3; "Clubwomen Aid Zone Plan," *SFX*, December 23, 1920, 1; Annie Laurie, Keep the Fires Burning," *SFX*, 2; Annie Laurie, "Vileness Bred at Public Dance Halls; Let's Go Back to Our Pre-War Standards," *SFX*, December 31, 1920, 1.
[143] Dr. Mariana Bertola, "A Cursory Glance Over the San Francisco District," *The Clubwoman* 9.5 (February 1921): 12. See also, "Vigilant Committee Plans Cleanup by Law Enforcement," *SFX*, January 18, 1921, 4.

dance halls would face losing their licenses unless they agreed to fire dance "'instructors'"—the scare quotes indicating the assumption they offered much more than tango lessons—and to prevent the attendance of women without chaperones.[144]

The city's five hundred dance hall instructors did not submit to these attacks upon their livelihood and character without a fight. Seventy-five representatives, ranging from "eighteen to thirty years old," "stormed" the WVC's next weekly meeting.[145] Did the WVC have comparable "work for each of us when you close the dance halls Friday night?" asked their leader, Helen Emick, declaring they "lived clean lives and were dance hall instructors because of the good wages they received."[146] Bertola's response displayed a tone deaf quality born of class privilege. "If this was the case" they might become "wonderful educators" instead. After both the city's mayor and the police commissioner refused to meet with Emick and the other representatives, they "stormed" the grand jury who, surprised to find they were not "classed with redlight district habitués"—declared a "thorough investigation" must be carried out before any more closings took place.[147]

Over the next six months, the WVC, reform minded men, and the *Examiner* spearheaded more successful drives, efforts that resulted in the removal of two Police Court judges and several police officers. Sylvain Lazarus—who presided over

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[144] "Disreputable Crowd Haunts, Charge," *SFX*, December 15, 1920, 1; "Winter Garden To Be Closed," *SFX*, December 21, 1920, 1; "9 'Closed' Dance Hall Licenses Are Renewed," *SFX*, December 28, 1920, 1;
[145] "Dance Hall Girls Storm Club Women's Meeting" *SFX*, December 31, 1920, 1-2.
[146] "Dance Hall Girls Storm," *SFX*, 1-2.
[147] "Jury Dissents with Police On Dance Halls; Inquisitorial Body Stormed by Girls," *SFX*, January 4, 1921, 1; "Women's Clubs Welcomes Jury Dance Hall Shift," *SFX*, January 6, 1921, 1.

Arbuckle's arraignment in Women's Court—replaced one of the recalled judges.[148] At the first trial, the WVC would argue successfully for a mixed jury of women and men at a time when even states like California, which allowed female jurors, rarely called them to serve.[149] Due to their efforts, 5 women and 7 men occupied the first jurors' box. One of these female jurors—described as "a titan haired Amazon combining the exact knowledge of a housewife and a firm belief in equal rights"—along with one male who "chivalrously' joined her, would hang the first trial after 44 hours of deliberation.[150]

The WVC, many of the city's other political and civic leaders, and San Francisco's newspapers were all prepared to view Arbuckle's "party" as another sex specific exercise in the abuse of power. But the stories that unfolded in Lazarus' courtroom complicated reading the circumstances surrounding Rappe's death this way. The confusing testimony offered by doctors failed to establish why Rappe's bladder had torn. Their jargon heavy descriptions offered several possible causes, including external force, vomiting, laughing, and "spontaneous" rupture.[151] In a perfect illustration of the tendency of Hearst papers to force testimony into a melodramatic mode, the headline

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[148] "Police Judges Recalled; Lazarus and Jacks Victors by 4000 Votes," *SFX*, March 2, 1.
[149] See Kerber, chapter 4. Kerber notes that in California jury service followed woman suffrage in 1913, making it one of the first states to allow women to serve. As a result, California was forced to pass that same year a statute reframing juror requirements—previously conceived of as "a body of men"—in order to end men successfully challenging convictions by female jurors. Despite California's comparatively progressive attitude toward female juror's participation, women's names were not placed on the same terms as men's until 1974, and peremptory challenges to screen jurors on the basis of gender were not ruled unconstitutional until 1994.
[150] *NYA*, December 5, 1921, 1.
[151] See doctors, Shelby Phipps Strange, CT, 31; William Ophuls, CT, 39; Arthur Beardslee, CT, 209-11.

regarding the testimony read: "TWO DOCTORS SAY VIRGINIA WAS SLAIN."[152] Most accounts made little of the medical evidence presented, perhaps taking a cue from the "spectators" who reportedly "seemed bored" by the day's proceedings.[153] The three other witnesses who appeared in court—the two "entertainers," Alice Blake and Zey Prevost, and Al Semnacher, the agent who drove Rappe up the Coast—provided material from which to shape more sensational copy. Here was a party filled with "dancing, talking, drinking" and "plenty of noise," a gathering in which participants were "having too a good a time to notice the time."[154] By all accounts, a drunken Delmont clothed in men's pajamas had decided on her own accord to demand entrance to the bedroom in which Arbuckle and Rappe had disappeared. When Arbuckle opened the door, still dressed in his pajamas, a fully clothed Rappe began to scream and tear at her clothes. "'I'm dying, I'm dying,'" all agreed Rappe had cried; one of the female guests added that Rappe later said "'He hurt me.'" The women undressed Rappe, placed her in a tub of cold water to revive her, and put her to bed. When Rappe started screaming again Arbuckle entered the room, warning, "'If she don't stop her yelling I will throw her out the window.'"[155] Rappe stopped screaming and passed out.

Ironically, the most genuinely shocking courtroom revelation proved "too vulgar to be printed" in newspapers—though in the long run readers' imaginations embellished the event to proportions that far exceeded the actual event.[156] Both Blake and Prevost

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[152] "Arbuckle Evidence; Two Doctors Say Virginia Rappe Was Slain," *CHE*, September 23, 1921, 1, 3.
[153] "Medical Experts Detail Bruised on Dead Girl's Body," *SFX*, September 23, 1921, 2.
[154] Prevost, CT, 301, 310.
[155] Prevost, CT, 299; Blake, CT, 336.
[156] "Testimony Is Vulgar," *LAT*, September 25, 1921, 1. It seems logical that this is where the story that Arbuckle raped Rappe with an ice chipper originated.

described watching Arbuckle "place a piece of ice on Miss Rappe's body" that, under pressure, they specified as her vagina.[157] "'That will make her come to,'" Arbuckle was said to have joked before Delmont "shoved his hand away." Semnacher's admission that Arbuckle had later joked about the action to the men at the party drew even more attention. "'Tell us the exact language the defendant used,'" newspapers quoted the prosecutor demanding of Arbuckle.[158] "Pale as a sheet and pleading to the court that he not be forced to repeat in open court the language used by Arbuckle," Semnacher "was made to write out the remarks for the benefit of counsel."[159] The court transcript revealed that Semnacher passed the judge a paper on which he had written the word "snatch."[160] "'Everyone laughed when Arbuckle made the statement,'" the witness continued. In retrospect, the witnesses displayed embarrassment at recounting "Arbuckle's prank," but at the time it seemed the women had considered Arbuckle's behavior a stupid joke, the men a funny one.[161] What papers called Arbuckle's "the ice bath" confession formed the highpoint of the trial's coverage. Shortly afterward, the state rested, creating another startling absence. After days of running headlines predicting Delmont would appear in court, the prosecution closed without calling the prosecuting witness to the stand.[162]

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[157] Prevost, CT, 300; Blake, CT, 337.
[158] "Fatty's Pal tells of Ice Bath to Girl," *CHE*, September 25, 1921, 1. See also, Semnacher, CT,167. Other accounts include, "Arbuckle's Boast Is Revealed; Admission of Actor Given By Semnacher," *SFX*, September 25, 1921, 1; "Arbuckle's Confession; Admitted He Hurt Girl, Pal Swears," final edition, *CHE*, September 25, 1921, 1; "Amid Laughter Arbuckle Told of Putting Ice On Girl In Pain," *NYA*, September 25, 1921, 1; "Testimony is Vulgar," *LAT*, 1.
[159] "Amid Laughter Arbuckle Told of Putting Ice On Girl In Pain," *NYA*, 1; "Testimony is Vulgar," *LAT*, 1.
[160] Semnacher, CT, 168.
[161] "Arbuckle's Confession," *CHE*, 1.
[162] Before the Police Court trial ended, papers ran dozens of early reports that relied on Delmont's testimony or were entirely built around it, including increasing accusations

In short, the trial revealed the party's atmosphere as a bawdy, free-wheeling, vulgar, or offensive, depending on one's point of view. That the party's participants played by different rules than those who judged them was emphasized when Arbuckle's attorney attempted to force Semnacher into admitting Delmont's behavior at the party had been decidedly unladylike.[163] "Well, everyone has his own ideas of a lady," he replied. On September 28th, less than three weeks after the scandal splashed across front pages, Judge Lazarus ruled that Arbuckle would stand trail for manslaughter—not murder, as the state had requested. After criticizing the district attorney for not putting Delmont on the stand, Lazarus noted "there is just enough evidence here, I may say barely enough, to justify me in holding the defendant."[164]

Judge Lazarus then offered a lengthy disquisition summing up the significance of what had transpired before him. This was "an important case," he contended, "We are not trying Roscoe Arbuckle alone. We are not trying the screen celebrity who has given joy and pleasure to all the world. Actually, in a large sense, we are trying ourselves."[165] Lazarus declared "the issue" before the court "universal," growing from conditions that "every true lover and protector of our American institutions" should fear. What the

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originating the *LAT* that she was trying to blackmail Arbuckle. Then—much to the shock of all and the chagrin of Judge Lazarus—the complaining witness was never called upon to testify. See "Brady Closes People's Case Against Star," *SFX*, September 28, 1921, 1-2; "Accuser Fails to Testify," *CHE,* September 28, 1921, 1-2; The Court (Lazarus), CT, 348-9.

[163] Semnacher, CT, 274.

[164] Lazarus, CT, 350.

[165] The testimony was covered in "Arbuckle on Bail For Manslaughter," *NYT*, September 29, 1921, 1-2; "Fatty Will Be Tried for Manslaughter," *CHE*, September 29, 1921, 1, 3; "Actor Escapes Accusation of Capital Crime." *NYA*, September 29, 1921, 1, 3; "Murder Count Is Rejected By Police Judge," *SFX*, September 29, 1-2; "Arbuckle Out on Bail; Held For Manslaughter," *LAT*, September 29, 1921, 1, 3.

threatened the American-way-of-life was that at "one of the largest and most pretentious hostelries of the city, in broad daylight":

> an orgy that continued many hours and resulted in the death of Miss Virginia Rappe, a moving-picture actress, was not repressed by the hotel management. It is of such common occurrence that it was not given attention until something happened, until the climax made it notorious. And the same thing happens in big cities all over the world. In this thing is a public lesson….

Society had been found guilty for allowing conditions to flourish that had led Rappe to attend the party—whatever the future legal outcome of the star's trial.

The actions of California's clubwomen indicated they intended to enforce higher moral standards upon the nation by regulating the public behavior of its stars. The women did not believe the evidence warranted Arbuckle's indictment on capital charges, calling the judge's decision "logical and satisfactory" and greeting his remarks with applause.[166] Yet a statement the WVC made shortly after Lazarus released Arbuckle on bail took the judge's logic one step further, arguing that "'regardless'" of whether Arbuckle was "'proved innocent or not of the police charges, his immoral conduct marks him as person unfit to appear before the American public.'"[167] To a large extent this opinion—which carried the endorsement of California's 60,000 other club women—merely cited a specific embodiment of what had already become the conventional wisdom: in order to protect the nation's daughters a large scale disciplining of Hollywood's personalities and social environment needed to occur. The WVC, and crusading columnists like Annie Laurie, articulated not just a feminist analysis of rape,

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[166] "Arbuckle on Bail For Manslaughter," *NYT*,1; "Murder Count Is Rejected By Police Judge," *SFX*, 1. See also, "Women Criticize District Attorney," *SFC*, September 1921, 1.
[167] Mrs. Hamilton quoted in "Women's Ban on Arbuckle Films Voiced," *SFX*, October 13, 1921, 8; On the California Federation of Women's Clubs decision to indorse this action see, "L.A. Women's Clubs Oppose Arbuckle," *SFX*, October 5, 1921, 3.

but a sense of the real dangers that might accompany young women's increasing freedoms. Clubwomen demanded that the reputations of young women like the telephone operators and Rappe not be placed on trial. Yet they also thought the best way to prevent such occurrences was to prevent young women from socializing outside the chaperonage of respectable guardians like themselves and to regulate the messages that encouraged them to want to go dancing, attend parties, or become movie stars.

The major picture producers released a statement to the press the week before Lazarus and the WVC articulated their positions that indicated they had started to gauge more accurately what America's reforming public demanded from them. A lawyer for Universal announced that "as a direct result of the Arbuckle case" all contracts for performers would henceforth include a "morality clause" that required them to conduct themselves "with due regard to public conventions."[168] The release, which seemed blatantly timed to coincide with the opening of the trial in Police Court, noted that in the event a performer did "anything to shock the community or outrage public morals or decency," Universal would terminate their contract in five days.[169] Every other studio quickly followed suit, prompting an editorials praising the decision to enforce "a higher standard of morals for stage folks."[170] The morality clause indicated producers' acceptance of a principle they had heretofore disputed: Hollywood was such an important influence on the public that it had the right to demand its regulation. Yet the news that players must abide by a "morality clause" was also a clever refocusing of the wider

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[168] "Morality Clause For Films," *NYT*, September 22, 1921, 8; "Morality Test for Film Folk," *SFX*, September 22, 1921, 2.
[169] Ibid.
[170] "Raising the Standard," editorial, *LAT*, September 25, 1921, pt. II, p. 4; "A Million Dollar Carousel," *Exhibitors Herald*, 42.

troubles besetting the industry, reducing the problem of controlling the industry and its images to the question of controlling its stars.

The morality clause held implications for male and female players alike, as the damning of Arbuckle for his general conduct indicated. But given society's still widespread endorsement of the sexual double standard—and the conflation of the case with seeming cracks in its edifice—the demand that players' adhere to "public conventions" exacted a heavier toll on the industry's women; a trend foreshadowed by the very different reactions expressed toward the divorces of Douglas Fairbanks and Mary Pickford. Here lay the roots of Hollywood's new double standard. In the 1920s—and beyond—the industry would perfect its ability to trade on women's sexuality while containing the presentation of their behavior as real life women within increasingly conventional feminine lines. Simultaneously, a new double standard emerged on screens concerning the price exacted from women who broke the sexual double standard and the ever escalating violent displays of men—as gangsters, Western heroes, or G-men.

Simple survival partially precipitated this strategy driven by the dual lessons the scandal emphasized: the industry was perceived as a peculiar endangerment to the morality of young women and the public and press took as much interest in "watching stars fall" as "watching them shine."[171] Or so Jesse Lasky explained to Gloria Swanson when the actress informed him she planned to seek a divorce from her second husband on the grounds of desertion that September. "'Impossible,'" Swanson recalled Lasky declaring with "almost paternal sincerity." According to Swanson, the producer "predicted there would be a rash of scandals because everyone was looking for them; and

[171] Gloria Swanson, *Swanson on Swanson* (New York: Random House, 1980), 167-8. All quotes this paragraph, Ibid.

whose life, he asked, could stand close scrutiny under a microscope or in the hands of a rabid columnist?" Lasky warned Swanson how easily her image of "'love, passion, glamour'" and "'the whole sophisticated atmosphere of Cecil B. De Mille and Elinor Glyn'" might be turned against her. Then perhaps she should tone down that image, Swanson proposed, and stop constantly posing in "'the most glamorous, sumptuous, seductive clothes'" money could buy. "'It's too late to change that'" Lasky snapped, a statement Swanson conceded to be simply "a fact."

The new morality clause in performers' contracts signaled another development the scandal helped to speed to along: the near total control that producers would wield over players in the studio era. As other producers followed the industrial course laid out by Zukor, tighter contracts and the demise of independent production would combine to severely curtail all performers' artistic and personal freedoms.[172] Louella Parsons, who started work for Hearst's *New York American* after the 1924 New Year, would become one of the new order's most effective watch dogs, wielding her ability to make or break reputations in the name of protecting and policing both the public and stars. But first the scandal prompted producers to make another more obvious move to improve its moral standing among the public at large. When Arbuckle's trial began two months later, it drew a fraction of the attention in press until the jury deadlocked in December.[173] Weeks later, producers, headed by Adolph Zukor, announced that William Hays would serve as president of a new trade association, the Motion Picture Producers and Distributors

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[172] On how the FTC, moving at its typical glacial speed, would not order divorcement of exhibition from production-distribution in the Paramount Case until 1948, see Richard Maltby and Ian Craven, *Hollywood Cinema* (Oxford: Blackwell Publishing Ltd., 1995), 71-3.

[173] "Arbuckle Trial Ends in Disagreement; Grand Jury to Probe Tampering Charges," *SFX*, December 5, 1921, 1,3.

Association (MPPDA or Hays Office).[174] The former Republican National Committee chairman, Hays currently served as the Postmaster General—a reward for his spectacular success at navigating the new field of public relations during Harding's campaign.[175]

With Harding's blessing that he take up this new "'public service,'" the Midwestern, Presbyterian elder was put in charge of making "virtue popular" in the new year of 1922.[176] A second jury deadlocked over Arbuckle's case even as two other headline grabbing scandals, involving the murder of director William Desmond Taylor and whether Pickford's quickie Nevada divorce and immediate remarriage to Fairbanks had made her a bigamist, rocked the industry before Hays took up the post.[177] Yet Hays

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[174] "New Organization of Distributors and Producers Planned—Will Hays offered Presidency,' *Wid's Daily*, December 9, 1921, 1-2; "Says Hays Accepts," *Wid's Daily*, December 21, 1921, 1; "Hays Accepts Offer to Head Producer-Distributor Alliance," *Exhibitors Herald*, January 28, 1922, 43-5. See also, Sklar, 82-3, 132; Garth Jowett, *Film: The Democratic Art* (Boston: Little Brown, 1976), 152-9. Accounts of the development of the idea for the MPPDA and the precise timing to approach Hays vary. See Lary May, *Screening Out the Past* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1980), 179, 205; Terry Ramsaye, *A Million and One Nights* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1926), 814-7. All authors agree, however, that the Arbuckle scandal convinced producers to go ahead with Hays' hire and the institution of the MPPDA. Certainly this was how the press of the day perceived the decision.

[175] On Harding's election, see Ellis Hawley, *The Great War and the Search for Modern Order* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1992), 44-9. On Hays as a major architect of "advertised politics" in the Republican Party, see Michael McGerr, *The Decline of Popular Politics* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1986), 169-171; John Braeman, "American Politics in the Age of Normalcy," 17-8, in John Earl Haynes, ed., *Calvin Coolidge and the Coolidge Era* (Washington D.C.: Library of Congress, 1998). On his use of newsreels in the 1920 election, see Ramsaye, 811-3.

[176] "How to Make Virtue Popular," editorial, January 17, *CHE*, 1922, 8. See also, "Hays to Quit Cabinet for Movie Post," *CHE*, January 15, 1922, 6; "Moral House-Cleaning in Hollywood," *Photoplay* (April 1922): 52-3; "Will Hays—A Real Leader; A Close-Up of the General Director of the Motion Picture Industry," *Photoplay* (May 1922): 30-1.

[177] "Mary Pickford Accused of Perjury," *CHE*, January 4, 1922, 1. "Arbuckle Jury 10 to 2; Calls Judge," *NYA*, February 2, 1922, 1. The never solved murder of director William Desmond Taylor, which turned into another orgy of accusations, wrecked the careers of Mary Miles Minter and Mabel Normand, see "Star Tell of Movie Murder," *CHE*, February 3, 1922, 1.

managed to stabilize the industry's political and moral capital over 1922, directing a successful drive to defeat a Massachusetts's referendum on censorship and a savvy exercise in damage control when actor Wallace Reid overdosed on drugs in the spring.[178]

Yet, ultimately, the scandal provided the most effective means for Hays to establish his credibility with the reforming public—particularly among clubwoman—regarding his willingness to discipline the social climate of Hollywood into shape. At his third trial, Arbuckle won a verdict of innocent and a public expression of sympathy from the jury. "'Acquittal is not enough for Roscoe Arbuckle. We feel a great injustice has been done him,'" the jury's statement declared on April 12th, "'there was not the slightest proof adduced to connect him in any way with the commission of a crime."[179] This turn about was in part effected by the defense's total assassination of the character and aspirations of Virginia Rappe, suggesting she was either a polluted prostitute or a pathetic pretty face victimized by men who took advantage of her ambition to become a star. Arbuckle's lawyer, Gavin McNab, claimed he had finally overruled the star's wish to protect "'the character of Miss Rappe'" at the third trial.[180] His closing statement, considered powerful enough to be included in *Classics of the Bar*, declared that Rappe and the other women who attended the party did "'not belong to the wifehood, the

[178] On the referendum, see "Industry Directs Guns at Massachusetts Censorship," Exhibitors Herald (October 25, 1922): 43; WR death turned into an educational opportunity about how addictive pain medication was and his wife's film about his valiant fight against the drug.
[179] "Arbuckle Is Not Guilty, Jurors Decide Quickly," *LAT*, April 13, 1922, 1-2.
[180] "McNab Pleads For Arbuckle; Poetry Quoted in His Slam Against Women," *LAT*, April 12, 1922, 2

sisterhood, the motherhood of the world.'"[181] According to McNab, they reminded him "'of the beautiful line of Ruskin's: 'Wherever a true woman is home is always around her.'" The day after Arbuckle's acquittal, Jesse Lasky announced that FPL/Paramount would "test public sentiment" as to whether the verdict had recuperated Arbuckle's reputation by releasing one of the comedian's pictures that the company had withheld.[182]

Within the week Hays made an announcement of his own: his "first official act" was to cancel the 10,000 contracts that had been made with theaters to show the films.[183] By the end of April, Hays used the imprimatur of the MPPDA to ban Arbuckle, and all of his films, from screens.[184] While it is impossible to know whether the action originated with William Hays or the producers, the immediate pressure that prompted the decision seemed clear. A front page headline had declared "Clubwomen Open War on 'Fatty' Film" the day before Hays released word that all the bookings would be cancelled.[185] According to the report, the Los Angeles District Federation of Women's Clubs had pledged the city's 22,000 members to direct a boycott of Arbuckle's film. The Los Angeles Club also planned to enlist all 60,000 of the CFWC's members in a drive to create a state censorship board to control the threat posed by an industry thought it fit to parade their support for a morally debauched individual in their own backyards. A flurry

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[181] McNab's closing argument quoted in, Ibid. For a reprint of the third trial's closing arguments, see Alvin V. Sellers, *Classics of the Bar; Stories of the World's Greatest Legal Trials, vol. VIII* (Baxely, GA: Classic Publishing Co., 1922).
[182] "To Release Fatty Film," *LAT*, April 13, 1922, 1. See also, "Zukor to Present New Arbuckle Comedy," *SFX*, September 13, 1922, 3. The films were *Gasoline Guss*, and *Prepaid Freight*, and *Leap Year*.
[183] "10,000 Date For Booking 'Fatty' Lost," *SFX*, April 19, 1922, 1; "Hays Cancels 'Fatty' Films," *CHE*, April 19, 1922, 1.
[184] "Hays Suspends 'Fatty' Arbuckle Films," *Moving Picture World* (April 29, 1922): 921.
[185] "Clubwomen Open War on Fatty Film," *SFX*, April 18, 1922, 1.

of glowing reports followed Hays's withdrawal of the pictures. After several meetings with Hays, the CFWC decided to forgo efforts to pass censorship laws and work with Hays to support "good films" instead.[186] By September, a writer in *The Clubwoman*, the magazine of the CFWC, extolled how its Committee on Better Films left a meeting with "Mr. Hays unanimously convinced of his genuine, enthusiastic sincerity, of the greatness of his vision, and of his ability, not only as the director general of the motion picture business, but as an unofficial public servant."[187]

First, and foremost, the scandal forced the industry to reckon with cleaning up the image of its new Hollywood home. The institution of a morality clause by all the major studios, Hays's installation as the industry's moral pooh-bah with a talent for making nice with the ladies, and Arbuckle's public sacrifice all served this purpose. The scandal may not have produced the same effect were it not for the particular social context of the years immediately following the war. After the scandal, the increased calls for state and federal censorship, as well as the Senate investigation of the industry's political practices, must have seemed to Arbuckle's boss Adolph Zukor like fearsome foreshadowing for an even more dreaded federal action: the break up of Paramount/FPL by the FTC. If the motion picture industry's new trusts were to survive, then at the very least the industry had to

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[186] "Women Urge Support of Good Films," *SFX*, April 30, 1922, 6. See also, "Women Laud Hays' Course on Arbuckle," *SFX*, April 20, 1922, 1; "Women Halt Film Address By Bosworth," *SFX*, April 22, 1922, 3; "Women Laud Arbuckle Ban By Will Hays," *SFX*, April 26, 1922, 17; "Club Women Told To Vote," *SFX*, April 28, 1922, 3.

[187] Mrs. A.A. Hummel, "Los Angeles Clubwomen Convinced of Will Hays' Sincerity Favoring 'Better' Motion Pictures," *The Clubwoman* 14.12 (September 1921): 13. See also, Will Hays Tells Clubwomen that Films Not Being Made Are the Industry's Test of Sincerity," *The Clubwoman* 14.11 (August 1922): 28-9. For more on their involvement with motion picture reform, see Mary S. Gibson, *A Record of Twenty-Five Years of the California Federation of Women's Clubs 1900-1925* (Los Angeles: California Federation of Women's Clubs, 1927).

present a public face more in line with conventional moral values, not one that showcased the exploits of a crowd of free spirited, party-loving bohemians.

By the end of 1922, the Hays Office would also attempt to clean-up what appeared on screens, establishing a Public Relations Committee (PRC) to devise a set of moral standards, better known as the Hays Code, designed to improve the morality of pictures. Clubwomen would be among the PRC's most important members.[188] The effects of such a reckoning were felt later that year when Elinor Glyn scripted *Beyond the Rocks*, a vehicle designed to showcase the passionate exchanges of Gloria Swanson and Rudolph Valentino. The director shot two versions of the love scenes: one for the U.S. market and a second for Europe.[189] Yet it quickly appeared as though hiring Hays, smoothing out the edges of Hollywood's public face, and disciplining its stars quieted concerns. And, since the Hays Code lacked an enforcement mechanism, it ultimately did little to effect the content of films in the twenties.

Not until the Catholic Church threatened a boycott in the midst of the Depression would a real policy of internal censorship take effect. The Catholic laymen and priests who led the charge against the industry after 1931 were outraged over the violent displays of a new breed of celluloid immigrant gangsters and films that challenged the government's ability to handle the period's turmoil. But the sexual content of films and of wildly successful stars like Mae West and Jean Harlow especially provoked their

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[188] See also Jowett, 174-81. Jowett notes that the Hays Office's attempt to reinstate Arbuckle during Christmas of 1922 "was met with violent reactions" from these two groups. For the residue of this sentiment that remained months later see, "The Rights of the Public," *Good Housekeeping* (March 1923): 8.

[189] Swanson, 173.

fury.[190] After 1934, when the Hays Code became more than a name, it ensured that women upheld the sexual double standard in their public personas and film roles—or paid the price. Shirley Temple replaced West as the most popular women on screens.

The representation of Virginia Rappe, as well as the image of her handed down in numerous accounts of the scandal, revealed much about the double standard both the industry and the public would impose both on the larger Hollywood landscape and on women more generally. Over the course of the scandal any real chance of thinking seriously about Virginia Rappe—who she was, what she wanted, or how she died—quickly vanished. The dominant narrative of the scandal shoehorned events into a traditional early nineteenth century styled melodramatic tale, first casting Rappe as the high-minded virtuous heroine, next as the pathetic fallen woman who, though perhaps sadly, got what she deserved. A spate of popular biographies interested in clearing Arbuckle's name carried this latter version into present day lore. The books have taken McNab's character assassination of Rappe at the final trial for fact, making her at best a pathetic starlet, at worst a two-bit prostitute whose venereal disease caused her death.[191]

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[190] On the particular consternation that the Catholic laymen and priests—many of whom were also extremely anti-Semitic—who devised and administered the Hays Code directed at the topic of sexual morality, see Gregory Black, *Hollywood Censored* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994); Thomas Doherty, *Pre-Code Hollywood* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1999). On the industry's increasing commitment to punishing women who broke the double standard see, Lea Jacobs, *The Wages of Sin; Censorship and the Fallen Woman Film, 1928-1942* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1991).

[191] As far as I could determine no transcripts of the three trials exist in public records. For the first in a series of popular biographies interested in clearing the comedian's name, see David Yallop, *The Day the Laughter Stopped* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1976). The author claims to have obtained copies of the transcripts of the trials. This may be true, but in comparing his use of it to the one in my possession; I can attest that he critically misrepresents the proceedings. Because of this, and the author's tendency to fabricate dialogue, I have not used it. Two more popular biographies display similar

The accounts also reduce the actions of the WVC to the acts of a hysterical mob of meddling women.[192] Such characterizations betray how easily women's actions along "sex partisan lines" might be ridiculed, how commonplace it is to suppose that a pretty, single ambitious woman who was less than a pure innocent had become little more than a witless whore. Certainly new risks lurked as more young women went out alone at night, took jobs, and socialized without chaperones. It is safe to assume that more than one Hollywood hopeful was forced, or felt pressured, into using the casting couch to get ahead. Yet the movie industry held no monopoly on such occurrences. The media's penchant for focusing on the sensational instances of women's victimization erased the more typical ways women were financially or sexually exploited—as if the petty tyrants in sex segregated, average work-a-day jobs or in their own and other people's homes posed no threat. Emphasizing the sensational dangers that confronted modern young women's new pursuits also served to better circumscribe their ability to take risks that

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tendencies, see Andy Edmonds, *Frame Up* (New York: William Morrow, 1991); Stuart Oderman, *Roscoe "Fatty" Arbuckle* (Jefferson, NC: McFarland, 1994). All three, perhaps somewhat justifiably, are entirely preoccupied with defending Arbuckle. In doing so they overreach, basically following the story presented by McNab in the final trial in which a noble, pure Arbuckle was defamed by unscrupulous women for the death of polluted starlet. For a wealth of bibliographical information on Arbuckle's career and an excellent filmography, see Robert Young, *Roscoe "Fatty" Arbuckle: A Bio-Bibliography* (Westport: Greenwood Press, 1994). However, the part of the book that deals with trial presents a similar portrait of Rappe, relying on Yallop's book which he otherwise criticizes, and an oral history by Arbuckle's wife. When I asked the author whether he based his portrait of Rappe on any other sources he kindly replied to me in an email that demonstrated how powerfully he had absorbed such assumptions—based on no evidence—himself. Email in my possession.

[192] For a solid, scholarly treatment of the scandal that resorts to this, see Gary Alan Fine, "Fatty Arbuckle and the Creation of Public Attention," in *Difficult Reputations* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2001), chap. 4. Fine too carries forward the apocryphal incident of the WVC spitting on Arbuckle. Having read so much about this alleged incident, I assumed it was true until combing through all the coverage. Fine cites Oderman and a *NYT*'s editorial that makes no mention of the event, see "Topics of the Times," September 30, 1921, 14.

challenged established gender conventions. And, in fact, other stories produced around the time of the scandal betrayed the ambivalence, or downright hostility, that many felt regarding Hollywood-styled, modern young women's ambitions.

Epilogue
The Girl from Hollywood

In 1922, Edgar Rice Burroughs, the best-selling author of *Tarzan* fame, published a novel that was little more than a pastiche fashioned from headlines taken from the Arbuckle-Rappe scandal. Its lurid prose left no doubt about Hollywood's transformation into a symbol of the destruction wreaked by women's selfish ambitions. Burroughs wrote *The Girl From Hollywood* at Tarzana, his 540 acre ranch in the San Fernando Valley, an area experiencing a population boom since its aqueduct-greening had created a lush, pastoral retreat protected from the increasingly urbanized parts of Los Angeles by a wall of mountains. The novel presented readers with the first noir portrait of Hollywood-cum-Los Angeles; here was a city whose "unnatural dangers and pressures" were all the more threatening because they took place under a dazzling azure sky. Tellingly, the novel's two heroines were not from Hollywood at all, making the title a declaration of how the ambitions associated with Hollywood obliterated the "real" girls. The first young woman, pointedly named Grace, puts her childhood sweetheart on hold and leaves her hometown ranch in the San Fernando Valley "to make her way own way, unassisted, toward her goal" in the capital of movieland.[1] Drug addicted and pregnant by a director-producer, Grace commits suicide within a year of her arrival. Shannon, the second "girl" to go Hollywood, is a Midwesterner driven west with the hope of supporting an ailing mother in style. While Shannon becomes a drug dealer to support both her habit and her mother, she manages to protect her virtue, explaining why Burroughs allows her to

[1] Edgar Rice Burroughs, *The Girl From Hollywood* (New York: Ace, 1979, rpt. 1923), 54. The novel was first serialized in *Munsey's Magazine* between June and December of 1922.

escape to the countryside. Ending up at no less than the very same ranch Grace deserted, Shannon's environment redeems her and she concludes the novel married and drug-free.

An interview in *Photoplay* with Roscoe Arbuckle published days before the scandal broke offered a more light-hearted take on the fears that modern women's desires may have prompted in men by the early twenties.[2] Written by Adela Rodgers St. Johns in her best "mother confessor" style, the reporter solicits Arbuckle's confidences about the opposite sex. "'Are you afraid of women?'" St. Johns asks the star after he evades several questions about his likes and dislikes in women. "'You bet I am. You just bet I am. So is everybody else that wears pants on the outside in this land of the free and home of the brave. Women are the free and we are the brave. The 19th Amendment is only the hors d'oeuvre to the amendments they will pass now they have found out they can,'" he replies. In the midst of attempting to make a transition from a star of slapstick shorts to a comedic leading man in feature length films, the interview probably sought to appeal to *Photoplay*'s women readers to broaden his appeal. Yet an undercurrent of real fear, bordering on hostility, also ran beneath the replies attributed to him. In response to St. Johns query as to what he thought women wanted, Arbuckle allegedly responded:

> 'Women want to smoke cigarettes, bob their hair, drink wood alcohol, have men friends, spend their own and everybody else's money, cut their skirts off just above the knee, run their own and your business, drive automobiles, go to conventions, elect mayors and presidents and be as independent as the Kaiser thought he was.'

Ultimately, the interview used all these double-edged descriptions about modern women's appetites to explain why readers should prefer a "good natured fat man" like Arbuckle. Only a "fat," "kind," "gentle" man would accept such dramatic gender role

[2] Roscoe Arbuckle, "Love Confessions of a Fat Man; As Told to Adela Roders St. Johns," *Photoplay* (September 1921): 22-3, 102.

reversals, the article proposed, reversals which even included men raising the children since women were "'going to be pretty busy and won't have much time.'"

Adela Rogers St. Johns's memoir, *The Honeycomb*, suggests the dialogue attributed to Arbuckle may have more closely approximated her own reservations about modern women. Her memoir opens with a discussion of "an old Irish proverb" about the impossibility of "driving three mules"—of managing wifehood, motherhood, and a career—to illustrate the central tension of her life.[3] To explain the proverb's significance, St. Johns turns to a 1924 debate she participated in with Alice Ames Winters, "president of the *all-powerful* General Federation of Women's Clubs," on the question: "'Is Modern Woman a Failure?'"[4] Having gone back to work part time at William Randolph Hearst's *Los Angeles Evening Herald*, St. Johns claimed her much revered boss "personally flung me into my famous debate." In it, she argued the case against the modern women. According to the reporter, Hearst staged the debate because he thought changes in women's roles had gone too far, too fast. "'My mother wished to give women every opportunity for bettering themselves and training their talents, but she was often disturbed at what would result if we went too fast,'" St. Johns recalled Hearst explaining, "'I have heard her say that this was the single most drastic move in history, that no one group, no single group had ever entered into so complete a change as the women of the twentieth century.'" According to St. Johns, her boss agreed that "'Unless we control this new freedom it may turn into license; women may lose their heads, and a nation is never any stronger than its women."[5]

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[3] Adela Rogers St. Johns, *The Honeycomb* (Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1969), 13.
[4] Ibid., 16. Italics in the original.
[5] Ibid., 21.

Much to her surprise St. Johns bested the older, much more experienced GFWC president, Alice Ames Winters. She did so by passionately damning her own distinctly Hollywood-styled modern life, by confessing to her audience her own failure to "drive her three mules." Ironically, Winters—who defended St. Johns's right and ability to drive her three mules—was a woman straight out of Hearst's mother's mold. A matronly, eminently respectable lady, she in lived in Pasadena, typically wrote under the name "Mrs. Thomas Winters," and worked not for wages, but to better the nation.[6] According to St. Johns, Hearst believed St. Johns would win because of Winters's style, predicting that her presentation of "youth and fire" would be more attractive to judges than Winters's Victorian middle age.[7]

St. Johns felt real turmoil about epitomizing a modern Hollywood woman—as the proverb she used to frame her memoir indicated. She wondered if she had used the justification of "careers for women" merely to make herself "a big shot instead of helping [her] husband."[8] Unhappily married to Ike St. Johns at the time of the debate, she later blamed the destruction of her marriage on her greater professional success. An article her husband Ike wrote for *Photoplay*—where he occasionally worked after several other careers floundered—declaring that women lacked the same artistic talents as men reads as an attack not just on his wife's success, but on all of early Hollywood's women.[9] Adela St. Johns's critique of herself was only one example of a growing genre in the twenties: confessions of "ex-feminists" who expressed frustration over the conflicts their

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[6] Alice Ames Winters File, AMPAS. Winters was president of the GFWC between 1920 and 1924. In 1929 she would become associate director of the MPPDA's Studio Relations Committee.
[7] St. Johns, *Honeycomb*, 21.
[8] Ibid, 31.
[9] Ivan St. Johns, "Fifty-Fifty," *Photoplay* (October 1926): 46.

freedoms produced and, often, a desire to put the genie of women's emancipation back in the bottle.[10]

As the exciting novelty of women's sensational "firsts" and explorations of modern frontiers wore off, a backlash regarding the consequences of these experiments spread. American society in the twenties offered no practical social support to help make women's new roles work. It contained no day care, no take-out, no idea that men should share in domestic chores, no real acceptance of the idea that white wives should work at all except in cases of dire need. And this principle—that only calamitous circumstances justified the wage work of married women in the respectable classes—makes it easy to understand why St.Johns's greater success was a destructive blow to her husband's ego. In short, much like the over-determined nature of why Arbuckle's party became an event that rocked the industry, the implications of what *The Girl From Hollywood* came to mean by 1921 seems inescapable in the context of the changing postwar social and political climate. When Paramount/FPL released *Hollywood* in 1923, the industry offered the first of many films that warned female fans to no longer take their dreams of success seriously.[11] The movie tells the story of a young hopeful who travels west with her grandfather in search of good fortune. Eventually the heroine marries, has children, and everyone in her family successfully breaks into the picture business but her. Yet, even if only for self-serving reasons, the hopeful girl in *Hollywood* still permitted female fans to once again dream about a self-propelled adventure, though this one came to a benevolent, but decidedly conventional, end.

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[10] See Nancy Cott, *The Grounding of Modern Feminism* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1987), chap. 6.
[11] *Hollywood* (Famous Players-Lasky 1923)

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